



LIBRARY OF HEAVEN'S PATH

by Heng Sao Tian Ya



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Library of Heaven's Path

– Tian Dao Tu Shu Guan –

- Part 3 -

-Author-

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Chapter 201

The Test

"Reporting to Tian laoshi, this is Zhang Xuan, a young, outstanding teacher of Hongtian Academy," Liu Ling introduced.

Even though Elder Tian no longer taught him, Liu Ling still called him teacher out of habit.

'He who teaches me for a day, I regard as a father for life.'

In this world, the relationship between a teacher and a student was uncompromisable. Even master teachers did not dare violate this sacred principle.

"Zhang Xuan?" Elder Tian shook his head impassively. He asked doubtfully, "Isn't the outstanding teacher from Hongtian Academy Lu Xun?"

"Lu laoshi is outstanding, but Zhang laoshi does not, in any way, pale in comparison. In fact, there are certain aspects in which he surpasses Lu laoshi." Recalling the situations that he saw in Hongtian Academy over the past two days, Liu Ling couldn't help but compliment Zhang Xuan.

He had merely taught his students for slightly more than ten days, in addition to being out of school so often, and yet.... every single one of his students experienced massive growth and their prowess escalated explosively.

Putting aside normal teachers, even the three of them finds it hard to achieve such a feat.

"Surpasses Lu laoshi?" A gleam flashed across Elder Tian's eyes. "To be complimented by you like that, he must be indeed capable and qualified to take a seat here. However, it isn't that easy to get to drink my tea. At the very least, he has to first pass my test."

"Test?"

Zhang Xuan glanced at Elder Tian.

I am only here to accompany Liu Shi and the others, I have no intention of drinking your tea.

Besides, do you believe your tea to be some immortal elixir or what? To think that I will need to be tested to drink it?

Zhang Xuan was about to reject the idea when Liu Ling turned to look at him excitedly with gleaming eyes.

"This is great! Zhang Xuan laoshi, this is an excellent opportunity, you must make full use of it...."

"Opportunity?"

It's merely drinking tea, what opportunity is there to speak of?

"It is the dream of countless cultivators to drink the tea made by Tian laoshi."

Seeing that Zhang Xuan didn't comprehend what was going on, Liu Ling explained with a smile, "You might not know, but Tian laoshi is extremely particular with his tea leaves and brewing method."

"The tea on the table right now is known as Spirit Calming Tea. There aren't more than three of its tea trees in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. They grow at the top of the snow mountain, White Pearl Peak, and are nourished by the sun more than sixteen hours a day. As such, when used to boil tea, the aroma lingers without dissipating."

"It is one thing for there to be limited tea trees, but there is a requirement for the picking of tea leaves as well. It mustn't be too young or too old; only leaves picked at exactly the sixth hour after the flowers of the tea trees bloom will carry the slight fragrance of flora. Accompanied with the cold weather at White Pearl Peak, drinking the tea made from these tea leaves is incomparably pleasurable."

"A tea tree doesn't already bear many leaves. In addition to the strict requirements for its picking, you can imagine the minute amount of tea leaves that are harvested. In fact, I can tell you that the annual production of such tea leaves in Tianxuan Kingdom totals up to only around three taels or so."

Zhang Xuan was astonished.

No wonder the other party regards the matter so highly, even conducting a test to see if the person is qualified to drink the tea. Judging by how valuable the tea leaves are, it is worth the effort to take the test.

"Of course, if it were just the limited harvest, one can only say that the tea leaves are precious. It wouldn't matter to a cultivator whether he drank it or not because it wouldn't be considered as an opportunity."

A cultivator values his cultivation the most. Regardless of how fragrant a tea is, it doesn't matter to them whether they drink it or not. There is no need for them to spend such a huge price just to satisfy their cravings.

"The reason why the tea leaves are so important is that of the use of the tea! Spirit Calming Tea has the effect of calming down one's mind. If normal people were to consume it, it would allow them to sleep better, ease their fatigue, and boost their spirit. On the other hand, if cultivators were to drink it, it will allow them to reach the level of Heart of Tranquil Water for a short moment. Even though it is just a momentary state, and one will automatically descend from it after a moment, it allows one to experience the sensation of being in that condition. This will prove to be an important assistance to actually reach that state in the future."

Liu shi continued, "Of course, just the tea leaves itself aren't enough. It has to be accompanied with Tian laoshi's consummate brewing skills to bring out such effects!"

"Allow one to reach Heart of Tranquil Water for a short moment?"

Zhang Xuan's eyes widened in shock.

Only when one reaches the Heart of Tranquil Water can he absolutely concentrate in whatever he does, totally unaffected by the surroundings or emotions.

Take for example the two apothecaries, Meng Yan and Chen Xiao, whom Zhang Xuan met during the Pill Debate. While forging the Tranquil Heart Pill, they infused their own emotions and physical state into the pill by accident, causing the pill to change and lose its original function.

The reason why such accidents occur is that the person has yet to achieve a breakthrough in his Will of Mind.

When one reaches Will of Mind 2-dan Heart of Tranquil State, even if one is plagued

with negative emotions, he can still maintain a tranquil state of mind and forge a perfect Tranquil Heart Pill.

The guild leader of the Blacksmith Guild, Luo Chong, has achieved such a level. It was due to him overeating the Dragon-scaled Prawns that he was unable to calm his mind, eventually failing to successfully forge any equipment.

"Many cultivators do not realize the importance of Will of Mind and think that it is absolutely useless. However, that's not the case. In order to achieve a breakthrough to Fighter 8-dan Zongshi realm, one has to reach Will of Mind 2-dan. Otherwise, without a pure mind, no matter how hard one tries, it is almost impossible for one to grasp the disposition and meaning behind Zongshi. Furthermore, this isn't only true for fighters, many occupations also have such requirements. For example, one needs to reach Heart of Tranquil Water before they are qualified to take the master teacher examination and formation master examination."

Afraid that Zhang Xuan had not understood, Liu Ling explained further.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Will of Mind isn't really a secret. There were records on it in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, and as such, with a single thought, he can easily look through it.

It was precisely because he knew it that he understood how difficult it is to raise one's Will of Mind. If merely drinking a cup of tea can allow one to enter the state of Heart of Tranquil Water, its effects are truly incredible, even though it is just temporary. Even the Tranquil Heart Pill doesn't have such effects.

It is no wonder that the Way of Tea is so popular within the kingdom, even exceeding painting at that. The reason for it lies here.

That is to say, if back then, Meng Yan and Chen Xiao were to drink a cup before their pill forging, they would be able to create a perfect Tranquil Heart Pill.

"Even though I come here often, it's not often that I get to drink a tea which such effects. This time, I have truly benefited from the halo of the three master teachers. Since Elder Tian agreed to give you an opportunity, you should grasp it." Emperor Shen Zhui smiled.

"May I know what test it is?"

Zhang Xuan was somewhat moved. Turning to look at Elder Tian, he couldn't help but ask.

Even though he had reached Heart of Tranquil Water, he was only at the most basic level. If he were to drink the tea, he might be able to enter deeper into the realm, feeling the intermediate level, or even higher than that.

Elder Tian didn't reply. Instead, he gestured, "Let them enter as well!"

Butler Tian nodded his head before stepping out. Shortly, a few other people entered.

They were Tian Long, Lu Xun, Wang Chao, Huang Yu, and Bai Xun.

"Lu Xun pays respect to Elder Tian!"

Upon walking into the room, Lu Xun stepped forward, clasped his fists, and bowed to Elder Tian.

"Un, take a seat! I've heard that you and Zhang laoshi are both outstanding teachers of Hongtian Academy. However, it is a pity that I only have one cup here, so I'll have to test you two. How about this, I will propose a question, and both of you will answer it. The person who wins qualifies to drink my tea. Liu Ling, what do you think?"

After having Lu Xun and the others sit down, Elder Tian turned to look at Liu shi.

Even though he spoke of drinking tea, as long as one wasn't a fool, one could tell what was going on.

"So this old fogey isn't really interested in testing me. What he wants to do is to create an opportunity for Lu Xun to display his skills...."

How can Zhang Xuan still not understand what is going on?

Even though he didn't know for sure why Liu shi and the others were treating him so politely all of the sudden, he could roughly guess the reason. They were probably intending to accept him in as their apprentice. Otherwise, why would three great master teachers approach a low-level teacher like him?

This matter had happened in the Tian Residence, and as the host, it was impossible for Elder Tian to be unaware.

Thus, even though he spoke of drinking tea, he actually didn't mean it. Rather, he was trying to make things difficult for Zhang Xuan and provide a platform for Lu Xun to perform so that the latter can once again earn the favor of Liu shi.

Zhang Xuan had no intentions to become Liu shi apprentice. Even so, the other party's move had displeased him. He felt that he was toyed with.

However, he wasn't in a place to reject the challenge.

Ever since the matter regarding the Teacher Evaluation spread out, people had been comparing him to Lu Xun. Even though it looks as though they are only vying over a cup of tea, they are actually competing to become Liu shi's apprentice. If Zhang Xuan were to reject the challenge, he would only be labeled as being frightened of facing Lu Xun.

If so, Lu Xun will definitely become more arrogant.

Since Zhang Xuan was able to tell Elder Tian's intention, Liu Ling could tell as well. Frowning, his complexion darkened.

Clearly, he didn't expect Elder Tian to make such a move.

Even so, since given that he was a student of Elder Tian and it was his birthday banquet, it wasn't appropriate for him to reject his request. Thus, he could only nod his head in approval. "Alright!"

While Liu shi and Zhang Xuan were unhappy, Elder Tian actually felt dismal.

Previously, after Liu shi spoke of Lu Xun in his letter and clearly stated his intentions to accept the latter as his apprentice, Elder Tian went through the trouble to invite Lu Xun and had specially prepared to make another cup of tea to receive him. The examination was intended to make the introductions even smoother.

However.... Lu Xun didn't come, and in his place came Zhang Xuan.

Looking at Liu shi's attitude, he realized that he is now interested in taking in Zhang laoshi, which means it is likely that he had given up on Lu Xun. This made all the preparations he had made in advance futile, and thus, he was displeased.

As such, he came up with this test all of a sudden.

Otherwise, having already told Lu Xun in advance, only for the latter to be unable to become an apprentice, it would be embarrassing on his part.

"Lu Xun is willing to follow Elder Tian's arrangement!"

Understanding the intentions of the other party, Lu Xun was delighted. He hurriedly clasped his hands and bowed.

"Since we're going to conduct a test, we should have a topic. I wonder what we should examine?"

Knowing that he wasn't in a position to reject the challenge, Zhang Xuan no longer bothered about the matter and focused on the test instead.

"Since we're all here to drink tea, we should discuss the Way of Tea!" Tian Long, who was standing by the side, said.

"Way of Tea?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

"Zhang laoshi had never come into contact with the Way of Tea, so it is a little too biased to test them on that!" Huang Yu couldn't hold herself back but utter.

She had interacted with Zhang laoshi often, so she knew that while the other party is a master painter, he knows nothing about the Way of Tea. In fact, when speaking to him earlier today, the other party was clearly completely ignorant of the subject.

Testing someone on the Way of Tea when he knows nothing about it?

Isn't this intentionally making things difficult for him?

Besides, based on what she knew, Lu Xun had specially learned the Way of Tea. Even though he can't compare to Tian Long, he had nevertheless listened to Elder Tian's lectures. At the very least, he is able to brew a tea of the first level.... Even a blind person can tell that this test is obviously unfair.

"To become a master teacher's apprentice, one should be knowledgeable in all occupations.... The Way of Tea is one of the occupations of the Nine Paths, not to mention that it is extremely popular in the kingdom, so how can he be ignorant of it? If Zhang laoshi really knows nothing about it, then I'm sorry, but I'll be drinking the cup of tea...."

Lu Xun chuckled softly, and confidence emanated from his gaze.

You wish to compete against me? See how I crush you to death!

"Indeed. If one doesn't even know of the Way of Tea, how can one become the apprentice of a master teacher? You might as well just admit defeat instead of embarrassing yourself here!" Wang Chao said.

Having shamed himself earlier, Wang Chao made use of this opportunity to get back at Zhang Xuan.

"Alright, even though this is my first time hearing of Way of Tea, I can learn about it right now. How will the test be conducted? We can start right now!" Upon seeing the other party's boastful attitude, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Since someone wishes to step on my face, I will return it with a vicious, tight slap.

Although this is the first time he heard of Way of Tea, there were plenty of books on the Way of Tea in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault. It filled the entire seventh and eighth shelf, and they added up to more than ten thousand books.

Back then, he had merely collected them into the Library of Heaven's Path, and he hadn't read through them yet. But at this moment.... It seems like it's time.

Chapter 202

Nine Years Spring

"Learn now?"

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's words, Lu Xun, Tian Long, and the others burst into laughter.

You must be joking!

Learning now? Do you think that the Way of Tea is some ordinary workmanship of those streetside craftsmen? That you can master it just because you said so?

This is an occupation! Even if you immersed yourself in it every single day, without countless years of effort, it would be impossible for you to bear results. You wish to pass the test just by learning right now... Will it kill you to be more humble?

However, this was good as well. This way, you won't be able to lift your head when you lose later on.

Lu Xun snorted.

While the others were laughing over Zhang Xuan's words, Huang Yu was on the verge of tears. She immediately sent him a telepathic message to persuade him otherwise: "You mustn't agree! Lu Xun has specially learned the Way of Tea and he is skilled in it..."

You don't even know what the Way of Tea is, yet you wish to compete against an initiate of the Way of Tea. Are you sure you aren't joking?

I have seen reckless people before, but I have never seen such a reckless person.

"It's no problem!" Knowing that she was truly concerned about him, Zhang Xuan reassured her with a smile.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan's will was resolute, Huang Yu panicked, but there was nothing

she could do.

"Hmph!"

Seeing how frivolous Zhang laoshi was acting, Elder Tian's face darkened.

He had immersed his entire life into the Way of Tea to master its way, yet this fellow, despite knowing nothing at all, said that he would learn it right now...

Learn what? How will you learn?

Do you think it's playing house? Do you think you will learn the art just by looking at it?

You must be joking!

Even the three master teachers were staring at one another, and deep wrinkles formed on their foreheads.

They had heard of Zhang laoshi's affair, but this was the first time they were meeting him in person. They didn't expect him to be such a reckless and frivolous person. If he truly had such a character, then despite his capability in imparting knowledge, they had to reconsider whether they should accept him as their apprentice.

"Let's begin then!" Suppressing the displeasure he felt, Elder Tian gestured. "The test is simple. Long'er, you'll brew a pot of tea after which Lu laoshi and Zhang laoshi will speak of the brewing technique used and its tea aroma!"

The Way of Tea was similar to pill forging in some ways. It had gone through countless years of inheritance and there were countless schools and techniques. The same tea leaves, if brewed using a different technique, would have differing fragrances, textures, and colors.

That was why there were no right or wrong methods in brewing tea. Rather, one could only say whether one was better than the other.

A good brewing technique could unleash the full fragrance contained within the tea leaves, nourishing the spirit of those drinking it.

"Understood!"

The edges of Tian Long's lips curled up. He glanced at Zhang Xuan before taking the tea tray and tea set from Butler Tian Gang's hands.

First, he used warm water to heat up the tea set. Then, grabbing a few tea leaves, he placed them into the teapot and flushed it with boiling water. When the tea leaves were steeped, the fragrance of the tea immediately gushed into the air, causing a deep aroma to linger in the hall.

"Incredible!"

"To think that Tian Long would achieve such deep understanding of the Way of Tea despite his young age. I'm impressed."

"From the looks of it, Tian laoshi has imparted all of his knowledge down to him. Soon, another incredible tea master will appear in the Tianxuan Kingdom!"

Upon seeing Tian Long's movements, the three master teachers nodded their head in approval.

They had learnt the Way of Tea from Elder Tian, and even though they hadn't reached the level of an official tea master, they had immersed themselves in the art for many years, so they possessed a decent amount of knowledge in it. Thus, they were able to see that Tian Long's skills were extraordinary.

"There are four levels to the Way of Tea, namely Redolent Hue, Essence Restoration, Infused Intentions, and Diffusing Fragrance! Even though nothing much can be said about his character, it is a fact that he possessed outstanding skills in the Way of Tea. Judging from his brewing technique, he should have already reached the second level, Essence Restoration!"

Afraid that Zhang Xuan couldn't tell what was happening, Huang Yu was communicating with him via telepathy.

"The first level, Redolent Hue. It refers to the level where the tea one produces has reached a certain level of mastery in terms of aroma and color, making it pleasing to the eye and the nose. Don't underestimate this level just because it is the lowest one. In order to reach it, you need to have a clear understanding of the amount of water and tea leaves you must use, as well as the state of the tea set. Without years of hard work, it is difficult to reach this level.

"The second level, which is the realm which Tian Long is currently at, is called Essence Restoration. At this level, you are no longer just showing off your skill. Rather, at this level, you infuse the art of tea brewing into your bones, granting them the ability to pull the most basic fragrance of the tea leaves out, allowing others to taste the most authentic tea.

"As for the third level, Infused Intentions, it is similar to that of the level of the same name in painting. The tea maker now understands the very essence of the Way of Tea, reaching the level where they are able to infuse their own artistic conception into the tea they brew. Those drinking it can experience the emotions of the tea maker through the tea he produces. At this level, one can take the tea master examinations and become an official tea master.

"Last but not least, the fourth level, Diffusing Fragrance. At this level, one can allow the fragrance of the tea to travel vast distances, such that people within several thousand li can smell it. At the same time, they can also confine the fragrance of the tea to the cup, making it linger within the cup. Those drinking such a tea would feel as though they were drinking a heavenly elixir. Elder Tian has reached such a level, and you can see the steam lingering over top the cup of tea he has poured. Upon reaching this level, not only will one be able to experience the full fragrance of the tea, the tea will also be warm no matter when one drinks it. It won't turn cold with the passing of time, which would affect its taste."

Huang Yu seemed quite knowledgeable of the Way of Tea, and she explained the various levels that a cup of tea could reach to Zhang Xuan.

Knowing that she was trying to help him, Zhang Xuan nodded his head, grateful.

After hearing her words, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but be impressed by how profound the art of tea brewing was.

Just these four levels would require one to immerse themselves in the Way of Tea for their entire lifetime.

Hu!

While they were speaking, Tian Long finished brewing his tea. He slowly poured it out, the tea gushing out like a fountain. The delightful sound of the tea lapping against the sides of the teacup echoed in the air, as if created by an instrument.

"I've embarrassed myself!"

After pouring the tea into the teacup, the true fragrance of the tea immediately emanated all over the room. The aroma seemed to have some energizing quality to it, making everyone in the room feel refreshed. Tian Long smiled slightly in glee.

Since he could reach the second level of the Way of Tea at his age, he could be considered as a genius among geniuses.

He quickly shot his gaze to Huang Yu, thinking that she would feel deep respect for him and leap into his embrace. Yet it turned out that she wasn't looking at him at all. Rather, she was chatting with Zhang Xuan. Tian Long's face immediately darkened, and he looked as though he would explode at any moment.

It had taken him great effort to learn this tea brewing technique, and he wanted to flaunt it before the beautiful lady... Yet it ended like this.

"Zhang Xuan..." Tian Long diverted all of his anger onto Zhang Xuan.

Seeing his furious gaze, Zhang Xuan blinked... 'I don't think that I've offended him. What's wrong with that fellow's head?'

...

"Now that the tea has been brewed, who will go first?"

Elder Tian looked around.

"Allow me!" Lu Xun stood up confidently. With an imposing disposition, he started to explain, "Brother Tian's technique is called [Root of the Fallen Leaves], and it comes from Master Changfeng from a century ago. He saw the growth of tea leaves over the course of three years when inspiration hit him, and he created this brewing technique."

"In the 'Root of the Fallen Leaves,' every single tea leaf is placed into the teapot based on their maturity. This way, the tea leaves would be steeped in the same sequence as well. Tea leaves are similar to humans in that they have veins, and are interconnected with one another. Steeping in this manner would be like soaking the tree from its roots to its tip. This kind of progressive brewing technique brings out the very essence of the tea leaves, allowing the tea to reach the second level, Essence Restoration."

At this point, he flicked his sleeves and chuckled lightly, "Brother Tian, I wonder if what I have said is right or not?"

"Brother Lu is indeed talented. Your words do not have the slightest bit of error," Tian Long replied.

"Alright, since I'm done talking about the brewing method, I'll talk about the aroma of the tea then!" Standing in the same place, Lu Xun took in the aroma of the tea and smiled. "The fragrance lingers around my nose, making me feel like I am in a tea garden. If I'm not wrong, it should have reached the fourth level."

In order to better differentiate between the level of the tea and its taste, some of the more incredible tea masters had allocated nine different levels for the aroma of the tea as well.

First level of tea aroma, Sweet Aroma.

Second level of tea aroma, Revitalizing Spirit.

....

Fourth level of tea aroma, Alluring Reminiscence.

....

Ninth level of tea aroma, Congregation of the Hundred Birds.

Even though Tian Long had brewed a tea of the second level, his tea aroma had already reached the fourth level, Alluring Reminiscence.

That is to say, upon taking a sip from this cup of tea, the aroma would permeate into one's dreams, making it hard to forget.

"Yes!"

After hearing Lu Xun's reply, Elder Tian nodded his head satisfied.

As expected of Lu Xun laoshi, his understanding of the Way of Tea was completely accurate.

"I'm finished. Zhang Xuan laoshi, it's your turn..."

Smiling faintly, Lu Xun turned to look at him.

"Me? You've already said everything, what else can I say?"

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

Wasn't this fellow too shameless?

The question only asked them about the brewing technique and the tea aroma level, and he had already said everything. What else could Zhang Xuan speak of?

If Zhang Xuan were to say the same things, Lu Xun could simply say that Zhang Xuan had copied his answer.

"Brother Lu only spoke of the name of the brewing method. The Way of Tea is profound and deep, and there are still plenty of things to talk about. Zhang laoshi, could it be that you don't know the technique I use, and you don't know what to say?"

With a cunning smile on his face, Tian Long said, "If that's the case, I think it would be best for you to just admit defeat to not make the atmosphere awkward!"

"Admit defeat? That isn't my way of doing things!" Zhang Xuan shook his head. At this point, Zhang Xuan's lips curled up as he looked at Tian Long playfully. "Are you sure you want me to speak?"

"Stop putting on an act here!" Tian Long flung his sleeves out.

"Alright then!" Zhang Xuan stood up. "What Lu laoshi said is true, Tian Long did use Root of the Fallen Leaves. This brewing technique should have been a highly profound technique that is capable of brewing tea of the third level, but... in his hands, its form has been completely misinterpreted and turned worthless. It's a failure!"

"You..." Tian Long nearly leaped in anger.

"You need not be in a hurry to deny my words!" Zhang Xuan chuckled softly. He walked over to Tian Long, casually lifted up the teacups to look at them, and slid his fingers across them.

"I need not say much about the tea set. In Elder Tian's residence, even if the equipment used isn't the best, it isn't too far from it. Let's begin from the moment you started brewing the tea. In the Root of the Fallen Leaves, the progressive sequence of the action is of utmost importance. When hot water is poured into the teapot, the hot water would flow through the veins of the tea leaves, like the tea leaves are drinking the water. There is no problem with the sequence you placed the tea leaves into the pot, but you neglected the unique property of the tea leaves."

"The tea leaf you used is called [Nine Years Spring]. From the emergence of the tea leaves to its harvesting and drying, the optimal time for its consumption is nine years. During that time, its fragrance would be the strongest. Am I mistaken on this?"

Zhang Xuan looked at Tian Long.

"You-you're right!" Tian Long nodded in astonishment.

Nine Years Spring was an extremely rare tea leaf. Putting aside the fact that its harvest was limited, it was rarely traded in the markets. Even for their Tian Residence, it took them a long time before they managed to gather several taels of it. How did this fellow who didn't know the Way of Tea know of it?

Chapter 203

Found the Wrong Person

"Usually, one year is sufficient for tea leaves to mature for consumption. Yet this tea leaf needs an entire nine years, showing its uniqueness. As a result, one needs to steep it for a longer period of time so that its fragrance can be further drawn out. Yet after pouring hot water in, you took out the tea leaves within three breaths. As such, it caused the fragrance that had accumulated in the tea leaves over a course of nine years to not be fully released. This is your first failure!

"Nine Years Spring grow in humid lands. As such, the tea leaves contain moisture within. Before steeping it, one needs to wash it with slightly salted water first in order to revitalize the veins of the leaves, allowing the tea leaves to better release their fragrance. Yet, not only did you not wash it beforehand, you even used a dry preparation method*. Not only did this affect the texture of the tea, it even caused the level of the tea to drop an entire level. This is your second failure!

"Before starting on the preparation of the tea, it's right for you to warm the tea set. However, due to your excessive desire to flaunt your skills, you placed tea leaves into the teapot before you were done warming up the entire pot. Furthermore, the tea leaves were still at room temperature when you placed them in, resulting in a loss of heat. This is your third failure!"

...

"Finally, when using the Root of the Fallen Leaves to prepare the tea, in the very final step of pouring the tea into the teacups, you should do it within three breaths to ensure that their aroma and taste is the same. Yet you dragged it on for seven breaths. As a result, the aroma and texture of the first cup and the fifth cup differs by almost an entire level. You can check it right now if you like. Although the first cup has reached the fourth level, the last cup is only at most at the third level. For there to be two different tastes for the same pot of tea, this is your seventeenth failure!"

All at once, Zhang Xuan pointed out seventeen of the other party's errors without any pause. Then he looked at Tian Long with sympathy. "For such an amazing technique, the Root of the Fallen Leaves, and such good tea leaves, the Nine Years Spring, to be

brewed by you in such a manner—what else could it be if not worthless?"

"You, you..."

Tian Long's face paled, as though he had met a ghost.

He wanted to refute the other party's words, but he was unable to say a word.

He had just learnt this brewing technique and it was natural that he would make many mistakes with it. Rationally, it wasn't a big deal. But how was the other party able to see through all of it?

Wasn't he inept in the Way of Tea?

His grandfather had said the same things as well. In fact, the other party pointed out even more flaws than his grandfather!

His grandfather could only point out four or five of them, yet the other party spoke of seventeen of them in a breath.

Could it be that the other party's knowledge of tea brewing exceeded that of his grandfather's?

How was that possible?

Not just him, at that instant, the hall fell so quiet that even a pin drop could be heard.

Everyone was staring at Zhang Xuan as though they were looking at a monster.

This was especially true for Lu Xun. His eyes were about to pop out onto the ground.

He was proud of the fact that he was able to point out the brewing technique the other party used, as well as the level of the tea aroma. Yet... not only was the other party able to see through these as well, he was even able to point out the flaws in his tea brewing technique precisely...

For a moment, he felt his face being brutally slapped. It felt fiery hot, as though it would tear apart at any moment.

What exactly was going on?

To be able to say so much about tea, to the point that you even have such an in-depth understanding of the Nine Years Spring. Are you a tea vendor?

"Elder Tian, may I know if my words are correct?"

Ignoring the astonishment everyone was going through, Zhang Xuan chuckled and turn his eyes to Elder Tian.

The tea brewing of a tea master was similar to a battle technique by a fighter, and the Library of Heaven's Path had compiled a book on Tian Long. If Tian Long hadn't provoked him, Zhang Xuan couldn't have bothered with him either and wouldn't have embarrassed him in public. Yet the other party kept trying to taunt him, even making use of Lu Xun to humiliate him. If that were to be the case, then Zhang Xuan felt a need to retaliate.

Of course, he had also gone easy on the other party. He had only pointed out a portion of his flaws. If he were to speak of all of them, that fellow would probably end up like Apothecary Bai Ming, his confidence would be completely crushed and he would find himself coming to a standstill in the Way of Tea.

"What you said..."

Honestly, Elder Tian was unable to ascertain the authenticity of half of the words the other party had said. But for the other half, it was absolutely correct.

Furthermore, for the half he wasn't sure of, based on his deductions from his knowledge in Way of Tea, they were likely to be true as well.

With just a single glance, the other party was able to see through so many problems?

Am I the tea master, or is he the tea master?

Elder Tian looked like he had seen a demon. After hesitating for a long time, he continued, "...are all correct!"

"All correct?"

"Zhang laoshi's words are all correct?"

Hearing his verdict, a commotion broke out in the hall.

This was especially so for Bai Xun and Huang Yu. They could see the frenzy in each other's eyes.

On the way here, Zhang laoshi had been asking about the Way of Tea, and it was obvious that he was a total rookie on the subject. It was clear that he hadn't even heard of the term before coming here... They were still worried about what would happen after he lost to Lu Xun. Yet, to think that such a twist would occur instead.

Brother, can you stop playing with our hearts?

If you have such an in-depth understanding of the Way of Tea, why must you feign ignorance?

"He must have done it on purpose..."

When Huang Yu recalled how she sent a telepathic message to Zhang Xuan to explain the four levels of tea brewing to him out of goodwill previously, Huang Yu felt like spitting blood. Most probably, that fellow must have been laughing at her ignorance...

"It seems like... Master Zhang was also like that during the painting examination..."

Just as Huang Yu was cursing the other party in her mind, she suddenly heard Bai Xun's perplexed voice.

Upon hearing those words, Huang Yu suddenly recalled the matter as well.

Back then... before painting, Master Zhang also seemed like a complete rookie, not knowing anything at all. But... after reading some books, he was able to create a painting of the fifth level easily...

This fellow. What was going on?

How could there be such a peculiar person in the world?

"Since it's right, does it mean that I've passed your test?" Clasp ing both his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan returned to his seat and looked at him calmly.

"Hold it right there!"

Before Elder Tian could even speak, Wang Chao abruptly stood up. "The question that

Elder Tian came up with was for Zhang Xuan and Brother Lu to tell the brewing technique used and the level of the tea fragrance, and whoever who was able to figure out both of them would be the victor. Brother Lu's answer of 【Root of the Fallen Leaves】 and fourth level of tea aroma isn't wrong! On the other hand, Zhang laoshi said so much, but he left out the main point. Thus, it could be said that he had gone off topic, so I think that Brother Lu should be the victor."

"Indeed, even though Brother Lu didn't speak of the latter part, it doesn't mean that he doesn't know of it at all. He simply thought that it was off topic and didn't find the need to bring it up." Upon hearing Wang Chao's words, Tian Long's eyes lit up.

If that fellow were to truly win this competition and become an apprentice of Liu shi, wouldn't he be together with Huang Yu daily? If so, Tian Long wouldn't stand a chance anymore.

So he couldn't allow the other party to succeed!

Furthermore, he had just been insulted by the other party. With such an ideal opportunity to put him down, how could he let it slip past his fingers?

"..."

Hearing the other party's words, Zhang Xuan was stunned.

He thought that he himself was a shameless person; to think that these two were able to top him at his field.

Gone off topic?

If spoken of, it was true that he had gone off topic, just that...

"Lu laoshi had already revealed the answer. If Zhang laoshi didn't say something else, wouldn't he just be repeating his answer?" Huang Yu couldn't be a bystander to the situation any longer and stood up furiously.

What kind of joke was this?

You've already answered all that could be answered, what do you expect the other party to say under such a situation?

If he answered just like you did, you would just say that he had copied you. On the other hand, if he said something else, you would simply say that he had gone off topic...

No matter what, you all are star teachers. Can't you all at least spare a thought for your dignity?

"Enough, stop arguing."

Seeing sparks flying from both sides, Elder Tian waved his hands. "It's my negligence for coming up with such a question, so let's just drop this."

"Drop this?"

Zhang Xuan stared at Elder Tian. It was clear that he was helping Lu Xun.

But this came as no surprise to him either. It was the first time Elder Tian had met Zhang Xun. Naturally, the other party would help Lu Xun, who he was more familiar with.

"Tian laoshi..."

Upon hearing these words, Liu Ling frowned.

Aren't you showing your favoritism too publicly!

"Enough, there's no need for you to say anymore. This matter is my fault, so I'll come up with another question for the two of them. There's no need for us to fuss over this matter," Elder Tian interrupted impassively.

"OK!" Since his teacher had already put it this way, out of respect for the other party, Liu Ling didn't refute his words. He could only look at Zhang Xun apologetically.

"I apologize for my inappropriate choice of question on the Way of Tea previously. However, I can tell that the two of you are extremely knowledgeable in the Way of Tea. If we were to continue pitting you two in this field, it might breed discord among you two instead. How about this: other than the Way of Tea, I am also slightly knowledgeable in the field of painting as well. Furthermore, I have just received an amazing painting recently. As teachers, you two should have some knowledge on painting as well. Thus, why don't I bring it out for you two to appreciate and appraise. Whoever's appraisal is more accurate will be the victor..." After hesitating for a

moment, Elder Tian stroked his beard and said.

"Painting?"

After hearing the other party's words, Zhang Xuan had to stifle in his laughter.

If the other party had chosen to test him on something else, Zhang Xuan would still have to dredge up the books from his library to look through them. But as for painting... there wasn't such a need at all!

Since he was able to draw a painting of the fifth level, he had already reached the level of a grandmaster in painting. Are you sure that... Lu Xun would be able to win against me?

However, it wasn't surprising that the other party would make such a decision. After the previous incident, Elder Tian could see that Zhang Xuan was knowledgeable of the Way of Tea. Even if he were to give another question on it, Lu Xun would still lose.

Naturally, Elder Tian knew of Lu Xun's background. Lu Xun's father was Master Lu Chen, a true master painter, and since childhood, Lu Xun often came into contact with paintings. As such, his knowledge of painting far surpassed that of his Way of Tea.

As a result, he decided to go ahead with a painting test.

This way, he would be using Lu Xun's strength against Zhang Xuan.

However, it was a pity that he couldn't have imagined that... even Lu Xun's father, Master Lu Chen, would have to address Zhang Xuan respectfully as a "master."

"Do you two have any disagreements?" After saying this, Elder Tian turned his gaze to the duo.

"Lu Xun dares not oppose Elder Tian's arrangements." Lu Xun clasped his hands and answered obediently, but on the inside, he was nearly dying of joy.

Even though Tian Long had said that Zhang Xuan was likely to be a master painter, Lu Xun had attributed the matter to just Zhang Xuan boasting. He didn't pay it any attention.

Also, he was much more proficient in painting than the Way of Tea.

Mo Chenzi, Yuanyu, Lu Chen, all of the works of the master painters and the books he had read when he was younger flashed through his mind. Slowly, a confident smile crept onto his face.

What a joke! He had just taken the Way of Tea to broaden his horizon, but painting was his specialty.

As long as Zhang Xuan wasn't a master painter, it was impossible for him to defeat him.

Lu Xun was confident.

"What about Zhang laoshi?"

Upon seeing him agree to it, Elder Tian nodded his head and turned to Zhang Xuan.

"I... agree as well!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Competing in painting appraisal?"

The three master teachers, Huang Yu, and Bai Xun knew of Zhang Xuan's background and they stared at one another.

A moment later, they simultaneously turned their gazes to Lu Xun, and the sympathy in their eyes was clear to see.

The Way of Tea competition between them previously didn't cause a huge blow to Lu Xun as it wasn't his field of specialty. As such, he didn't get discouraged even though he lost to Zhang Xuan. But as for painting...

He would probably cry himself to death this time.

Sigh, poor child.

Honestly, Lu Xun, you found the wrong person to compete with...

*There are two methods to preparing Chinese tea: "dry preparation" and "wet preparation".

In wet preparation, you need a special tea set, and after washing the equipment, you just pour the water on the tea set (which usually have a drainage section). As such, it

is labeled "wet preparation method".

On the other hand, dry preparation is much cleaner. All of the unused water is dumped into the sink/waste container.

Chapter 204

Lu Xun's Appraisal Skills

Initially, Liu Ling wanted to tell Elder Tian about the matter, but upon recalling how the other party interrupted his words, he decided not to say anything for fear of incurring his irritation.

"Since both of you are fine with it, Tian Gang, bring that painting over." After saying this, Elder Tian gestured.

"Yes!"

Soon, Tian Gang came over with a large but thin box in his embrace.

"This is the painting Liu Shi has gifted me. I believe it is fitting of the word 'perfect.' No matter how many times I look at it, I can't help but compliment it. Today, you'll have the blessing to view the work of an incredible master!"

Elder Tian chuckled as he took out the painting from within the box.

"I really hope that I can meet a master painter of this caliber before my death and witness his extraordinary skills."

Stroking the painting in his hands, respect gleamed in Elder Tian's eyes.

There were many similarities between tea brewing and painting. Due to this, he also held a fervent passion for painting. Even though he had yet to reach the level of master, he was still quite knowledgeable in the field.

"Alright, I'll stop talking. I'll let you guys see the painting now. Zhuang Xian, Zheng Fei, since you two are skilled in painting as well, you should give your opinions on it too."

He carefully unrolled the painting. An ink painting immediately appeared before everyone's eyes.

A deer stood on a grass patch, eating the grass warily. Beautiful wild flowers bloomed

throughout the surroundings, and for an instant, the spectators could really smell the scent of flowers.

Even though it was just a flat painting, the wild deer seemed like it would leap out of the painting at any moment.

"This is... a painting of the fifth level?"

Right after taking a look, Lu Xun's eyes narrowed and his breathing quickened.

As someone from a distinguished painting family, he held a deep understanding of paintings. As such, he was able to see the ingenuity of the painting with a single glance.

The level of the painting was clearly beyond that of Breathtaking Verisimilitude.

Even when considering the entire Tianxuan Kingdom, it was possible that not a single painting of such caliber would be produced in the span of a century. Being able to appraise such a painting was a great honor for him.

Even a master painter like his father had never seen a painting of this level.

"Indeed, it is a painting of the fifth level. However, it is a pity that the painter didn't leave behind his name and the name of the painting. Otherwise, I would've surely paid him a visit personally!"

Elder Tian shook his head in regret. "Alright, let's start the appraisal now. Whoever's appraisal is more accurate and on point will be the victor. This time, the three master teachers and I will be the judges, so there is no need to doubt the fairness of the judgement. This time... Zhang laoshi should go first."

Since Lu Xun was the one who spoke first last time, for the sake of fairness, Zhang Xuan should be the one to go first this time.

After Elder Tian finished speaking, the hall fell silent for a moment. He couldn't stop himself from looking in the direction of Zhang Xuan, only to see him staring at the painting with a dumbfounded look.

Seeing him in such a state, Elder Tian frowned.

A painting of the fifth level was profound, and it was easy for amateurs who didn't

understand painting to lose themselves in the painting, unable to discern the painting aside from reality. Clearly, Zhang laoshi was suffering from such an effect.

How could a fellow who was unable to discern the painting from reality understand painting?

It seemed like he made the correct decision choosing to conduct a painting test. This Zhang laoshi shouldn't be a match for Lu Xun at all.

"Hmph! After boasting so much, it turns out that you are only on this level. Master painter? You must be joking!" Upon seeing Zhang Xuan losing himself in the painting, Tian Long sneered.

If Master Yuanyu's words had raised his doubts, seeing the fellow in such a state now made all of them vanish.

How could a true master painter be reduced to such a state upon seeing a painting of the fifth level?

He must have been too astonished by the sight that he lost himself.

"Zhang laoshi!" Elder Tian called.

"Yes!" Only then did Zhang Xuan recover from his trance. With a bizarre expression, he said, "There's no need. I'll allow Lu laoshi to go first. I... will just listen to his appraisal first!"

"Alright, I will go first then. However, I hope that you won't find any excuses when you lose later on!"

Seeing how the other party didn't even have the courage to go first, Lu Xun became disdainful of Zhang Xuan.

This fellow must have thought that the painting before him was too profound, and he didn't know how he should appraise it. That's why he allowed Lu Xun to go first. Afterwards, he could just make up some comments based on Lu Xun's words.

You might have been able to use that move just then, but now that I'm prepared, how can I allow you to do so again?

Flicking his sleeves, Lu Xun walked to the middle of the hall. Absolute confidence exuded from his body.

"As a painting of the fifth level, this painting is left behind by a painting grandmaster. As such, I dare not claim to understand the painting fully, and if there're any mistakes in my appraisal, I'll be depending on everyone here to correct me!"

Walking forward to the painting, Lu Xun's eyes gleamed with the disposition unique to a master. "To appraise a painting of such level, you must slowly zoom in from outward, and slowly dive in from the details to its essence. Thus, I will first talk about the overall painting."

Back then, during the competition on tea brewing, he had only spoken of the name of the brewing technique and the tea aroma level, allowing a lot of leeway for the other party to perform. This time, in preparation against that, he intended to speak of all he could on the painting.

As long as I say everything that can be said, let's see what you will say later on!

Since you like to fake it so much, I will see how you can continue acting when there's nothing for you to say!

"Even though the painter hasn't left his name behind for this painting, it contains a deep artistic conception within it. With just a single look you can feel you are in a vast grassland, surrounded by flowers, and watching a wild deer calmly eating grass... My guess is that the grandmaster who painted this painting must have been standing in a vast grassland, taking in the spectacle and tranquility of the sight when inspiration struck him, resulting in the creation of this masterpiece."

"If a name should be given to it, I think that it should be... Burnished Blue Skies!" Lu Xun said.

"Burnished Blue Skies? Not bad. That's an imposing name! I believe that it reflects the painter's state of mind then, awed by the sight before him!" Tian Long praised.

Did you see that?

That's a true master painter, being able to see through the essence of the painting at once, inducing lofty thoughts in others.

"After that, I will go on to speak about its contents and the painting technique used. Clearly, this painting was painted using the Double Hook technique. First, the painter drew the outline of the objects before painting in the grand artistry, filling in the colors of the flowers, grasses, and the wild deer. Only through this painting method can one create such a grand painting with such powerful artistry!"

Lu Xun's eyes were glowing.

"Double Hook technique? Don't you think that it is Dual Traversing Dragons instead?" Zhang Xuan couldn't stop himself from commenting.

"Dual Traversing Dragons? Do you even know what that means?"

Before Lu Xun could speak, Tian Long had already burst into laughter. "Dual Traversing Dragons is a technique that streetside craftsmen use when they're pressed for time. It is used for replicating a painting, and even so, only by replicating the same painting over and over again can one successfully replicate a painting down to the minute details. Yet, you say that this fifth level painting is created through such a technique? Haha, are you sure you understand anything about painting?"

Tian Long wasn't the only one who stared at Zhang Xuan in disdain, even Elder Tian couldn't help but shake his head.

Painting a painting of the fifth level through Dual Traversing Dragons? That was like saying one could display the strength of the powerful Dragon Subduing Palms through executing the basic Long Fists. Are you sure that you are a master painter and not a comedian?

"You sure have a vivid imagination!"

Lu Xun sneered. The contempt in his eyes deepened and his lips curled up in disdain. Disregarding the fellow who didn't know anything about painting, he turned to look at the painting again before continuing, "I have just spoken of the overall picture, so I'll touch on the details now. On this aspect, the grandmaster has drawn them with painstaking detail, making them incredibly lifelike. Looking at these flowers, you can clearly see the veins in them; as for the deer, you can actually make out the fur on its body... As such, even though the painter is a grandmaster, he likely took a minimum of two or three days to finish this painting.

"Only through slowly sculpting the details can one bring out the minute details

perfectly and elegantly, making it impossible for the audience to find any fault with it. I must say that this master's patience is outstanding!"

Awe flashed in Lu Xun's eyes. After pacing in front of the painting, he added, "Last but not least, even though this painting has profound artistry, and the painter's name isn't left on it, based on my years of experience of appraising paintings, I can roughly guess his identity."

"Oh? You're able to guess his identity? Who is it?" Hearing his words, Zhang Xuan couldn't resist asking. The strange look on his face deepened as well.

Putting his hands behind his back, Lu Xun glanced upward, and with haughtiness and incredible confidence, he said, "There aren't more than seven masters in the surrounding kingdoms who are capable of painting such a grand and moving painting in the past century. Of the seven, only three of them have produced paintings of this sort in the past.

"And the three of them are, to wit, Senior Jin Mantang from Beiwu Kingdom; Senior Wu Jiechao from Hanwu Kingdom; and Senior Yun Shaoqing from Shenwu Kingdom."

"Senior Jin Mantang left behind his masterpiece at the Eighteen Zhang Waterfall, of which, the pine trees were painted with forceful strokes, giving the painting a prehistoric feeling. On this aspect, it felt extremely similar to how the wild deer and grassland were drawn, so he should be the most likely suspect. However, Senior Mantang passed away eighty years ago, and if he had left behind this painting, it would likely have been discovered by someone already. Thus, it is highly unlikely for him to be the painter.

"As for Senior Wu Jiechao, he specializes in painting animals. It's said that he once painted a white crane lying on the ground, and it attracted a flock of real cranes to wail for their companion's death, eventually dying from grief. Most likely, only someone of his level is capable of painting this wild deer.

"However, he only specializes in painting animals, not flora and fauna. Most probably, of the kingdoms nearby, the only one who can paint such an outstanding masterpiece is Senior Yun Shaoqing! More importantly, of the three grandmasters, he's the only one who is still alive."

"So my guess is that this drawing is a work of his."

At which, Lu Xun stood proudly as he looked at Elder Tian.

"Good, your analysis is in-depth and logical!"

Elder Tian applauded.

Did you see that? What is professionalism?

This is professionalism!

Not only was his analysis logical and backed by evidence, he was even able to deduce the likely painter of the work. As expected of Master Lu Chen's son, his knowledge and discernment were indeed outstanding. He would probably be the victor of this test.

"Alright, Zhang laoshi. It's your turn!"

After complimenting Lu Xun, Elder Tian turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

"It's my turn? Are you sure you want me to speak?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Of course. Why, do you want to say that I've already said everything, and that there's nothing left to add?" The mockery in Lu Xun's eyes was clear.

"No... Actually, I can't think of anything to say... After contemplating for a long time, I only have four words for it!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Four words?" Elder Tian and Lu Xun looked at him, perplexed.

"Yep!"

Zhang Xuan scratched his head embarrassed. "If I'm not wrong... I painted this painting!"

Chapter 205

Is It My Victory?

"You painted it?"

The hall fell completely silent.

Then a commotion broke out.

"You said that this painting of the fifth level was painted by you? Zhang Xuan, you are going to make me die of laughter. Even if you can't appraise anything about it, you should just admit your defeat. You don't need brag to such an extent!"

"You sure are thick-skinned. Even if you want to brag, there should be a limit. Are you going to tell us that you are Grandmaster Yun Shaoqing next?"

"Know your place! Do you know what a painting of the fifth level means? To think that you would dare to claim that you are the painter, stop joking!"

Tian Long, Lu Xun, and Wang Chao sneered. The three of them stared at Zhang Xuan as though he were a fool.

What does a painting of the fifth level mean?

Currently, in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom, there wasn't a single person who was capable of producing a painting of such level. Not even Lu Xun's father, Master Lu Chen, was capable of such a feat. Yet a mere low-level teacher of the academy who wasn't even twenty yet said that he had created such a painting. If this wasn't a joke, what could it be?

"Liu Ling, is this the person you intend to accept as your apprentice? He is arrogant and boastful. Do you think that it is fitting for such a person to be a teacher?"

Elder Tian's flung his sleeves as his complexion darkened.

Ever since Liu Shi had sent this painting to him, he had hung it on his wall and

appreciated it every single day. Regardless of how many times he had seen it, he couldn't help but be impressed by it. All along, he had thought that it was a masterpiece from some grandmaster painter and admired him. Yet this fellow said that he was the one who painted it?

It was an insult to this masterpiece.

"Tian laoshi, this painting..."

Upon hearing hearing his teacher's furious interrogation, Liu Ling looked slightly hesitant. "...was really painted by Zhang Xuan laoshi!"

"What, you admit that he's arrogant as well... Huh? What did you say?" Halfway through the sentence, Liu Ling's words suddenly hit him and he almost fainted. With quivering lips, he asked, "He... he painted it?"

"Yes, this painting... was painted by Zhang laoshi a few days ago..."

Liu Ling smiled bitterly.

Back then, when Huang Yu passed this painting to him so that he could pass it on to Elder Tian as a gift, her words also stunned him.

Even in a Tier Two kingdom like Beiwu, a painting of the fifth level was a hard to come by treasure. Yet such a treasure came from the hands of a low-level teacher of Hongtian Academy, not even mentioning that the other party wasn't even twenty yet...

Even though he had heard from his apprentice directly, he found the matter hard to believe.

"This... this..."

Elder Tian's eyes narrowed and his face flushed with embarrassment. If there were a hole in the hall at this moment, he would have dived in at that instant.

As a master teacher, it was impossible for Liu Ling to lie about such things. That meant that... the painting really came from the hands of Zhang laoshi.

Elder Tian had been speaking praises of the painter all along, saying that he would like to meet that painter before his demise, yet now that the painter was before him, he

doubted his identity...

"I don't believe it... Even if he had started learning from his mother's womb, it is impossible for him to produce such an incredible work..." Hearing Liu shi admit to it, Lu Xun gritted his teeth.

He had just praised the creator of the painting to the high heavens, be it his technique or his brush strokes... He even guessed the identity of the creator of the painting to be the esteemed grandmaster painter. It seemed that all that was missing was for him to bow in reverence to the painting. Yet... it turned out to be the one whom he had been trying to put down all along. This was unacceptable to him.

"I don't believe it either. Liu shi, don't be fooled by him—" Wang Chao bellowed as well.

However, before he could finish speaking, Zhang Xuan had already walked up to the painting and his hands gently touched the painting.

Whoosh!

With a crisp sound, the wild deer seemed to have suddenly came to life. Turning its head around, it leapt out from the painting, dancing for a moment before dissipating into thin air.

"This is... Origin Spirit? The Origin Spirit which only the creator of the painting can trigger?"

"A painting contains the blood, sweat, and tears of its creator, and as such, it is perfectly aligned with the creator's spirit. When a painting reaches the fifth level, as long as the creator touches it, the painting will automatically form a spirit..."

"This... He really painted it..."

It was easy to determine the creator of a painting when it reached the level of Spirit Creation. As long as the creator were to come into physical contact with it, the painting would automatically display its ability to come to life.

Seeing the wild deer running about, the aura of the painting seemed to resonate with Zhang Xuan laoshi... No matter how stupid a person, it was clear that the creator of the painting was him.

"How... is this possible?"

Lu Xun staggered backward before falling onto the floor. He was on the verge of tears.

Just a moment ago, he was still confidently uttering that the creator of the painting was definitely Grandmaster Yun Shaoqing, and that he had used the Double Hook painting technique. In the end... reality turned around and slapped him right in his face.

Brother, if I knew you are a grandmaster painter, I would have never competed with you!

Aren't I just looking for a beating?

Next to him, Wang Chao and Tian Long convulsed, on the verge of passing out.

Especially Tian Long. He finally understood why even Master Yuanyu treated this fellow with utmost respect, even wanting to learn from him...

A grandmaster who was capable of producing a painting of the fifth level... was worthy of that much respect.

"Grandmaster Zhang Xuan, please pardon me for my blindness..."

With an awful complexion, Elder Tian stood up and clasped his hands together. In an instant, he seemed like he had aged a decade or more.

Having immersed his entire life in teaching and enlightening others, he had enjoyed quite a tremendous reputation. To think that he would slip up here.

Having Lu Xun compete with a grandmaster painter in a painting competition?

Was there anything more ridiculous than this?

He had intended to help Lu Xun become an apprentice of Liu Shi, but in the end... he simply made things worse. Furthermore, it was the worst kind of worse...

It was no wonder that Liu Ling and the others were willing to drop their identities just to convince the other party to become their apprentice.

If a grandmaster painter who was capable of producing a painting of the fifth level were to become an apprentice, he would immediately be eligible to take the master teacher examination. If he passed the examination, his teacher's reputation would definitely resound through the surrounding kingdoms.

Without answering Elder Tian's words, Zhang Xuan stood before the painting quietly, staring at it. "I painted this painting at Master Lu Chen's residence a few days ago. I wasn't standing on a grassland, and I didn't use the Double Hook painting technique either. What I used was the Dual Traversing Dragons. Also, the painting took me forty-seven breaths, not the few days you spoke of."

"Dual Traversing Dragons?"

"Forty-seven breaths?"

Lu Xun's mouth twitched once more.

Back then, he had said confidently that even if the one who painted the painting was a grandmaster, he had to spend at least a few days on it, and it was very likely that he was standing in the midst of a grassland, inspired by the sight before him. Yet, to think it was actually created at home, not to mention, in such a short period of time...

And what that shocked him the most was that Zhang Xuan used the replication technique, which only streetside craftsmen used, to produce a painting of fifth level...

You are about to pierce the heavens at this rate!

Hearing those words, tears threatened to fall from Tian Long's eyes.

Back then, he had humiliated the other party when he talked about this technique. Yet, in the blink of an eye, it turned out that the other party spoke nothing but the truth, and that he was just humiliating himself!

Can Dual Traversing Dragons, a technique used to hasten one's painting speed, really create such an incredible painting?

Zhang laoshi, exactly how incredible are you?

Ignoring the duo, Zhang Xuan touched the painting and said, "May I know if there's any brush and ink here?"

"Yes, of course!"

Elder Tian gestured and Tian Gang immediately rushed out. Soon he brought in a brush and ink. Due to his agitation, he nearly tripped when entering the hall.

As long as one wasn't a fool, it was clear that Zhang laoshi was going to leave his name on this painting.

The presence of a signature on a painting could change the value of a painting vastly. Often signed paintings tended to be ten times more expensive.

Not to mention, Zhang laoshi was such a young grandmaster painter. In a few years' time, when he had become a master teacher and his name had rung loud throughout the surrounding kingdoms, the value of this painting with his name on it would definitely soar exponentially.

Of course, the value of the painting was of secondary concern. More importantly, it was an incredible honor to see a grandmaster painter adding his own signature onto the painting!

"This painting doesn't have the imposing aura Lu Xun spoke of, and neither does it have a profound artistic conception. Thus, it isn't worthy of the name 'Burnished Blue Skies'!" At this, Zhang Xuan dabbed the brush into the ink, walked up to the painting, and without any hesitation, his brush started to dance around.

Shua shua shua!

Two large words appeared on the top of the painting.

"Wild Deer?"

Seeing the name he had written, everyone was stunned.

They thought that Zhang Xuan would give it an awe-inspiring name... Wasn't 【Wild Deer】 too casual a name?

"Candid. This is the level of a true grandmaster," spoke Elder Tian after a moment of silence.

"Indeed, the center of focus of this painting is the deer. Everything else in the painting

frames it. All the artistry and dispositions contained within the painting are brought out through it. Even though the name, 【Wild Deer】 , sounds simple and unimpressive, it brings out the main content of the painting, bringing the entire painting up another level," Liu Ling commented in awe.

Zhang laoshi was indeed a remarkable existence. Putting aside the fact that he was able to become a painting grandmaster at such a young age, just the name he came up with was sufficient to bring the entire painting up another level.

"That isn't just it. If the painting were named Burnished Blue Skies, those who looked at the painting would be affected by it. Their focus would be brought to the contrasting elements instead of the true essence of the painting. On the other hand, 【Wild Deer】 might be a simple name, but it doesn't constrain your thoughts. It allows room for your imagination to run, adding to the disposition and artistry of the painting," said Zhuang Xian.

"Indeed, they are indeed divine words..." Zheng Fei nodded his head. Just when he was about to say his piece, he suddenly paused abruptly and pointed ahead. "Look!"

Everyone looked over, only to see the wild deer from the painting leaping out once more. It stared at Zhang Xuan fondly and licked his hand a few times before slowly dissipating into thin air.

"This is... Spiritual Wisdom?"

"A Spiritual Wisdom realm painting? No, it hasn't reached that level yet, otherwise the wild deer would materialize for a longer moment than this."

"Even so, it isn't too far from it. Just by adding a name, the entire painting was raised by another level, and now, it was just a single step away from reaching the sixth level..."

Looking at the wild deer's appearance, everyone was stunned. All of their faces flushed with excitement.

The first four realms of painting were Reality Depiction, Spiritual Canvas, Infused Intentions, and Breathtaking Verisimilitude, respectively.

The fifth realm was Spirit Creation.

Above Spirit Creation, there was still a sixth realm, the Spiritual Wisdom they spoke of.

It was said that all of the animals in a painting of this level would possess their own intelligence, and were able to absorb spiritual energy to maintain their form outside the painting for a short period of time, creating a mystical sight.

Everyone here had thought that it was just a legend, but to think that they would have the honor of seeing it in person.

Even though the wild deer in the painting was still unable to absorb spiritual energy to maintain its form for a longer period of time, just the fact that it was able to display its affection for its creator showed that it had started to gain intelligence.

If it were nourished in a location where spiritual energy was in abundance for a century, it might just become a genuine painting of the sixth level!

For just a name to bring the painting up nearly an entire level, the two words "Wild Deer" were indeed worth thousands of gold each!

At this moment, everyone stared at the young man before them with fiery eyes.

This was especially true for Huang Yu and Bai Xun. They were so excited their bodies were trembling.

Ignoring their excitement, Zhang Xuan placed the brush down and scanned the surroundings.

"I'm done with the appraisal. This test... is it my victory?"

Chapter 206

Gifting Tea Leaves

Only after hearing those words did everyone remember that the conclusion of the test between him and Lu Xun wasn't out yet. All eyes immediately shot to Elder Tian.

"You win..."

Elder Tian sighed bitterly.

An appraisal competition against the creator of the painting?

What a joke! It would be ridiculous to say that Zhang Xuan had lost!

More importantly, just by granting the painting a name, the painting was raised by nearly an entire level.

"Zhang laoshi, here is your Spirit Calming Tea!"

Since Zhang Xuan had achieved victory, Tian Gang handed the teacup to him. The steam from the tea still lingered above it and the fragrance tickled Zhang Xuan's nose. Even before drinking it, Zhang Xuan felt refreshed and energized just by the aroma itself.

After taking the teacup, just when everyone thought that the young man would drink it and indulge himself in its fragrance, he simply tilted the cup and poured it onto the floor.

Hualala!

The fragrance of the tea immediately diffused all around the room.

"Zhang laoshi...."

Upon seeing such a valuable cup of tea being wasted, Liu Ling, Huang Yu, and the others were astonished. Disbelief shone in their eyes.

This was Spirit Calming Tea, a tea which countless cultivators dream off, only to remain out of their grasp... Even Huang Yu, an assistant master teacher, wasn't qualified to drink it. To pour it away like that...

What a waste of precious resources!

Everyone looked regretful.

"Zhang Xuan, my grandfather offered you such valuable tea out of goodwill, yet you poured it away like that. What do you mean by that?"

Tian Long abruptly stood up.

His grandfather had his butler present Zhang Xuan with the tea, but the other party poured it away in front of him. This was blatant disrespect for Elder Tian.

Besides, even Tian Long wasn't qualified to drink the tea. Yet this fellow simply wasted it like that. He found it unforgivable.

Infuriated, regardless of whether the other party was a grandmaster painter or not, he immediately rebuked him.

"Unfortunate!"

Ignoring the other party's howl, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and looked outside the hall. It seemed as though his attention was somewhere far away. He sighed.

"Stop putting up a front here. You are the one who poured away the tea, yet you're saying it's unfortunate now. Do you really take the Tian Clan as people you can step on like that?" Tian Long lashed out.

He was the one who poured the tea out, yet he was saying that it was unfortunate now. What the hell are you trying to do?

Are you doing it on purpose?

Everyone else were perplexed as well. They had no idea what Zhang laoshi was up to.

Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and the others stared at each other confused.

As master teachers, they possessed incredible discerning capabilities, allowing them to see through many matters. Yet they realized that their discerning abilities were useless before him.

They couldn't see through the other party's cultivation, his thoughts, or his intentions...

He was a mystery wrapped in an enigma.

Especially now. Despite the risk of offending Elder Tian, he spilt the tea on the floor... What was he up to?

If things went on like this, there'd be no backing down anymore. They were considering whether they should step forward to mediate the situation.

Just when everyone was feeling apprehensive of the fight that was about to occur, Zhang Xuan turned around to look at Elder Tian.

"The tea leaves of Spirit Calming Tea grow at the peak of the ice mountain, granting it its calming and revitalizing properties. It is harvested right after the blooming of its flowers. Usually, when brewed, it should allow one to maintain Heart of Tranquil Water for hundred breaths. Yet this cup could only allow one to maintain the state for twelve breaths. For the effects of such fine tea leaves to be reduced to this state, if this isn't unfortunate, what else can it be?"

"You... How did you know that this cup of tea could only maintain Heart of Tranquil Water for twelve breaths?"

Elder Tian was initially infuriated by Zhang Xuan's actions as well, but upon hearing his words, he was stunned.

The effects of Spirit Calming Tea were clearly stated in the books to last for hundred breaths. However, no matter how Elder Tian brewed the tea, he was only able to maintain its effects for twelve breaths or so. Initially, he thought that it was due to the inaccuracies of the book, but hearing the matter from Zhang laoshi's mouth at this moment, he was astonished.

I thought you didn't drink the tea?

If you didn't drink it, how could you have known the effects of my tea?

"The tea set, teacups, and teapot are the Emerald Radiance Set personally created by Master Potter Wu Qingzi. As for the water, it came from the deep well in Three Gardens Platform, and it was exposed to the sun for two days straight before boiling it for an hour. And for the brewing technique, you used 【Seven Hearts Coiling Hands】 to make the tea. In order to brew this tea, you have cleansed yourself, eaten a vegetarian diet for seven days straight, and adjusted your state of mind to Heart of Tranquil Water. You went for perfection on every single aspect, fearful that a mistake would occur in the midst of anything. However, it is unfortunate... The effects of the Spirit Calming Tea you brewed still weren't maximized. Even more so, it could be said to be a failed product!"

Zhang Xuan gestured casually.

"You..."

Elder Tian was flabbergasted. He didn't even notice the teacup in his hands falling onto the table.

The words of the other party were... completely correct!

The water used for steeping the tea leaves was indeed from the deep well in Three Gardens Platform, the brewing technique he used was Seven Hearts Coiling Hands, and the tea set used was the Emerald Radiance Set. Before brewing the tea, he did cleanse himself and abstain from meat for a week...

He had kept all of these a secret, such that even Tian Long didn't know of it. Yet, how did Zhang laoshi find out?

More importantly... to know of all of them in detail?

It was said that a grandmaster tea brewer could see through the flaws and problems within a tea just by looking, smelling, and tasting it. From there, they could offer the other party instruction, allowing the person to refine their skills.

Could it be that... Zhang laoshi wasn't just a grandmaster painter, but a grandmaster tea brewer as well?

If that were the case, if Zhang laoshi offered him some advice, could it be possible for him to break through his bottleneck and reach an even higher level?

Elder Tian trembled, agitated.

Just when he was about to consult the other party on this matter, he heard Tian Long angrily howling, "To dare say that the tea which grandfather brewed is a failed product, who do you think you are? Do you think I won't teach you a lesson right now?"

Upon hearing these words, Elder Tian's eyebrows twitched and he nearly passed out.

In the Way of Tea, he had reached a bottleneck, and for many years, he had been stuck trying to surpass his limits. Right now, given how the other party was able to see through the mistakes in his Spirit Calming Tea, if he were to offer him some advice, he might be able to achieve a breakthrough. Yet... his hopes were shattered with the words of this brat.

Moreover, you wish to teach a person on the level of a grandmaster in the Way of Tea a lesson?

You unfilial brute!

If not for your prejudice of this Zhang laoshi, I wouldn't have been so biased against him. If I hadn't been so rude to him, the other party wouldn't have been so displeased.

Dammit!

The more he thought, the angrier he became. "Shut up!"

"Ah? Grandfather..."

Tian Long didn't expect his grandfather to bellow at him like that. Dumbfounded, he stood blankly on the spot.

"Go away, don't get in the way of us here!"

Waving him away, Elder Tian hurriedly stood up and walked over to Zhang Xuan. Clasping his hands, he bowed earnestly, like a student meeting a teacher. With a respectful tone, he said, "Zhang laoshi is right, the tea I've brewed is indeed a... failed product. It doesn't have the effects that a true Spirit Calming Tea should possess..."

He had no choice but to admit it.

Given how the other party's words were all true, he had likely seen some problem. If he were to reject his opinion vehemently at this moment, he would simply incur the ire of the other party. If so, he would pass by this opportunity to reach greater heights.

"This..."

"Spirit Calming Tea can allow one to remain in the state of Heart of Tranquil Water for hundred breaths?"

Hearing Elder Tian admit to it, a commotion broke out among the crowd. Everyone stared at the young man as though he were a monster.

Especially so for Huang Yu and Bai Xun, they pulled their hair frenziedly.

Wasn't Zhang laoshi completely ignorant of the Way of Tea when he came?

Why could he see through so much now, even making Elder Tian lower his position and admit defeat?

Off to the side, Lu Xun and Wang Chao were even more so on the verge of insanity.

Isn't this fellow garbage?

To be a grandmaster capable of producing a painting of the fifth level at one moment, to be able to impress Elder Tian in the field of Way of Tea in the other... Where can one find such incredible garbage?

"Zhang laoshi, I hope that you can point out my mistakes so that I can correct them and not waste such precious tea leaves."

After admitting that he was unable to fully unleash the properties of Spirit Calming Tea, Elder Tian looked at Zhang Xuan respectfully.

"I have come to your Tian Residence with the invitation of the three master teachers as a guest, yet all I've been welcomed with was contempt ever since my arrival, even to the point of being tested of my capabilities..." At this, Zhang Xuan shook his head as he glanced at the elder before him. "Do you think this is the appropriate way to treat a grandmaster painter?"

"I..."

Embarrassment flushed on Elder Tian's face.

If the other party were just an ordinary noble, this matter would of no great import. But Zhang Xuan was a grandmaster painter, and it was very likely that he was a grandmaster in the Way of Tea as well.

It was one thing to not show a person of such identity the respect befitting of him, but to test him...

This was clear contempt for him.

The reputation of a master teacher mustn't be sullied, and the same could be said about grandmasters as well.

Regardless of which occupation it was, reaching such a level meant that one had surpassed countless others and achieved an incredible level of mastery in the field. Even in Conferred Kingdoms, they were respected existences. Yet, in a moment of folly, he...

"Frankly, I don't want to say much. However, on account on your sincerity, I can offer you some advice."

Zhang Xuan glanced at him thinly. "Red wine has to be enjoyed in a wine glass. Even wine has its own silverware, needless to say, tea. Spirit Calming Tea has a calming property, but even though the Emerald Radiance Set is a treasure left behind by an esteemed potter, it is hot in nature. Since heat breeds irritation, how can one remain calm? This is my first piece of advice.

"The Way of Tea is an art of tranquility. Your actions of cleansing yourself and abstaining from meat is a form of respect for the art. However, since it should be an art of tranquility, should there be a banquet for it? Given the commotion, your heart is already disturbed, so how can you brew the most perfect Spirit Calming Tea? This is my second piece of advice!

"You should keep these two points in mind. Perhaps this might be beneficial to your progress in the Way of Tea. I still have things to attend to, so I will be leaving now. Farewell!"

Zhang Xuan waved and headed outside.

"Zhang laoshi, please wait..."

Before Zhang Xuan could step out of the hall, Elder Tian hurried forward.

"Zhang laoshi, your advice has enlightened me. This is a token of my appreciation. I hope you can accept it."

After which, he beckoned and a servant brought a box to him. Opening it gently, the deep fragrance of tea leaves gushed into the air.

"The tea leaves of Spirit Calming Tea?"

"Given the quantity... two taels?"

"Even considering the entirety of Tianxuan Kingdom, only three taels are produced every year. But you want to gift two taels at once?"

Upon catching scent of the fragrance, the eyebrows of everyone here shot upward. They were all shocked by Elder Tian's gesture.

This was definitely a huge gift.

Importantly, even Emperor Shen Zhui didn't have much of a chance to drink it. Through this, it was clear to see how valuable the tea leaves were. Yet Elder Tian gifted two taels of tea leaves at once, an amount sufficient for one to brew more than a dozen pots... Wasn't this gesture of goodwill too generous?

"Looks like... even though Zhang laoshi's advice sounded ordinary, it has enlightened Tian laoshi. Otherwise, it would be impossible for him to offer such a generous gift to him..."

While they were shocked by his gesture, they also understood that a gift didn't come freely. Elder Tian's action of giving so many tea leaves to the other party meant that... the other party had pointed out the fundamental errors behind the tea he had brewed, and Elder Tian had benefited greatly from his words.

Without even drinking the tea, with just a single look, he was able to point out the problems, resulting in Elder Tian gifting his tea leaves to the other party willingly...

How many surprises did this Zhang laoshi hold within him? Was there still more to

him that they didn't know of?

Chapter 207

Returning to the Academy

After accepting the tea leaves, Zhang Xuan went away without a peep.

In the very first place, he didn't intend to attend this birthday banquet at all. If not for Huang Yu and Bai Xun's request, as well as for an opportunity to meet the three masters to ask them about the poison aura, he wouldn't have cared about Elder Tian one bit.

Even if it was a funeral, he would've never come to such an event.

Even though he didn't get an opportunity to ask the three master teachers of the matter, based on their attitude, they would likely come looking for him soon. It wouldn't be too late to ask them about it then.

Since that was the case, there was no longer any purpose for Zhang Xuan to remain there.

As for why Zhang Xuan was able to see the flaws in the tea Elder Tian brewed, the reason was simple. The moment Zhang Xuan stepped into the hall, the other party was in the midst of brewing tea. As such, the library automatically compiled a book on it, and just by flipping through it, Zhang Xuan would know everything about him.

If not for that fellow intentionally trying to pit him against Lu Xun and siding with the latter, he wouldn't have been bothered about it and embarrassed the other party in public.

You wish to make use of Lu Xun to humiliate me?

What a joke! Those who try to slap my face will be sent flying with a slap of mine. It doesn't matter to me whether you are Elder Tian or whoever. There are no exceptions.

"Elder Tian, Your Majesty, Liu shi, Zhuang shi, Zheng shi, we'll be taking our leave as well!"

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan leave, Huang Yu and Bai Xun quickly followed behind him as well.

They were the ones who brought Zhang laoshi here and they didn't think it appropriate for them to remain here given the situation.

The moment they left, the room immediately fell silent.

"Grandfather, that's Spirit Calming Tea! Why, why did you suddenly gift so much of it..."

Tian Long felt indignant.

Even if the advice had helped his grandfather, there shouldn't be a need for him to shower the other party with such a generous gift.

They had paid a huge price to get someone to pick and process the two taels of tea leaves for them. It wasn't something that one could just buy with money.

Even his grandfather couldn't bear to drink it on casual occasions, yet to gift it someone else like that...

Just thinking of it, Tian Long felt his heart ache.

"Much? It isn't much at all!"

Glancing at his grandson, Elder Tian shook his head.

Even though his grandson seemed intelligent, and he had entrusted his expectations onto him, at this moment, it seemed that his character and magnanimity were severely lacking.

"Elder Tian is right. Two taels of Spirit Calming Tea isn't much at all. Putting aside the fact that he had offered valuable advice to Tian laoshi, just the two words Zhang laoshi wrote on the painting are valuable," Emperor Shen Zhui said.

The two simple words, "Wild Deer," were truly a priceless treasure. It had raised the already valuable painting of the fifth level by nearly another entire level. Even if they gifted him all of the tea leaves in the Tian Residence, they would have still made a profit.

Not just that, by this kind gesture, they could reduce the hostility a grandmaster painter felt for them, perhaps befriending him even.

"I have benefitted greatly from Zhang laoshi's advice. Tian Long, Tian Gang, I'll leave the birthday banquet to you two. I would like some time for myself to digest what I've learnt. Perhaps his words may allow my mastery in tea brewing to reach new heights."

Elder Tian nodded his head before falling silent.

"Then we won't be imposing on Tian laoshi any longer!"

Liu Ling knew that the other party was inviting them to leave, so he left the hall along with Emperor Shen Zhui and the others.

"Your Majesty, we still have things to attend to, so we won't be returning with you to the royal palace."

Upon leaving the Tian Residence, the trio bade Emperor Shen Zhui farewell before leaving hurriedly.

Needless to say, they were going to look for Zhang laoshi.

"He is truly a god among men!" Seeing how even the three master teachers were impressed by Zhang laoshi, Emperor Shen Zhui commented in awe. After which, he turned to a eunuch and said, "Make preparations. I want to watch the Teacher Evaluation tomorrow as well!"

"Yes, Your Majesty!" the eunuch replied.

.....

Awhile after the three master teachers and Emperor Shen Zhui left the Tian Residence, Lu Xun and Wang Chao walked out of the mansion. The moment they left the perimeter of the residence, resentment and indignance immediately burned in their eyes.

"He is just a low-level teacher, why? Why! Dammit! Dammit!" Lu Xun howled loudly. The hatred in his eyes was so deep it could dye a river black.

He thought that the banquet for Elder Tian would be an impetus for a breakthrough,

and he would successfully become Liu Shi's apprentice. Never in his dreams did he expect... such a conclusion.

The fellow he had been looking down on had trampled over his pride numerous times, riling him up so much that he was about to spurt blood.

The strong sense of humiliation he felt made him want to go on a rampage.

He, Lu Xun, as the son of the emperor's tutor, had lived a smooth sailing life since childhood. All along, he had been the one who humiliated others. When had he ever suffered a setback of this sort?

"That fellow must have spent all of his effort and time studying painting and the Way of Tea, so his ability to impart knowledge must be bad. As long as you triumph over him in the Teacher Evaluation tomorrow, you should be able to return the shame to him," Wang Chao said.

Even though Zhang Xuan was talented, it was impossible for him to be talented in all aspects.

Even if he were truly talented in all aspects, given the limited time and energy a human possessed, he would have to spend a bulk of his time researching painting and the Way of Tea, thus neglecting his education abilities.

The duo were still rather confident in their abilities as teachers, so they didn't believe that they would still lose to Zhang Xuan here.

"I must win the Teacher Evaluation tomorrow." Hearing his words, Lu Xun nodded his head.

He had been humiliated enough today. He couldn't afford to lose to the other party anymore.

"Wang Chao, don't you know that apothecary? I would like to buy a few pills to give it a try."

Clenching his fists tightly, Lu Xun turned to look at his friend.

"Buy a few pills? You mean you want to..."

Upon recall, Wang Chao was horrified. He quickly shook his head, "You can't do it! Even though that can raise your cultivation within a short period of time, it will damage the student's foundations, making it hard for them to improve in the future..."

"I can't care about it anymore! I must win tomorrow... There's no retreat for me now. As long as I win and become Liu Shi's apprentice, I will be able to become a master teacher within ten years. By then, I can easily repair the trauma they will suffer. In fact, by then, granting them a life of luxury wouldn't mean anything to me."

Gritting his teeth, Lu Xun's eyes contained a frenzied gleam.

"This..." Wang Chao hesitated.

Wang Chao knew about his friend's talents. He was just a step away from becoming an official painter, and the moment he broke through this bottleneck, he would be eligible to take the master teacher examination. Given the experience he had accumulated as a teacher in the past few years, as well as his study on master teachers, it wouldn't be a problem for him to become a master teacher within ten years.

Once he became a master teacher, it wouldn't be a difficult task to make up for these students' losses.

He could easily provide them with a life of luxury then, and repairing their trauma wouldn't be impossible whatsoever.

"Alright, we've no time to waste. It's fortunate we haven't returned the three million which we borrowed from Emperor Shen Zhui. That should be sufficient for us to buy five pills. Let's go and buy them now. I'm going to make them raise a storm tomorrow. Not only will I triumph over Zhang Xuan, I will make everyone know that in the Hongtian Academy, I, Lu Xun, am invincible!" Flinging his sleeves, Lu Xun roared.

"OK, I'll go take a look now..."

Knowing that Lu Xun's mind was made up and that it was impossible for him to convince him otherwise, Wang Chao nodded his head.

What Lu Xun said made sense: there was no retreat at this point!

They had offended Yang Shi in the royal palace, making it nigh impossible for them to become his apprentice.

The three master teachers had set their sights on Zhang Xuan. If the two of them were to lose, there wouldn't be any chance for them anymore.

Their only hope was the Teacher Evaluation tomorrow. They had to make everyone know that Lu Xun was the true star teacher in Hongtian Academy, the number one teacher of the entire Tianxuan Kingdom.

And that Zhang Xuan... was nothing at all!

He wasn't even qualified to vie with them!

.....

"Weren't you going to give this painting to Elder Tian? Why did it become Liu shi's present instead?"

Before Zhang Xuan could get too far, Huang Yu and Bai Xun caught up with him. Seated in the carriage, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled the matter and asked.

Back then, while Huang Yu and Bai Xun were competing over the Ink Daylily Canvas, Zhang Xuan suddenly produced paintings of the fifth level, and the pair immediately bought Zhang Xuan's works instead. Back then, it seemed that they had intended to buy his painting to present it to another as a gift, so he was curious why it became a gift from Liu shi instead. Also... where was the painting Bai Xun had bought?

"Actually, the reason why I asked for the Ink Daylily Canvas was to help Liu shi prepare a present for his teacher. Thus, it is natural that he was the one who presented it to him," Huang Yu said. "As a junior, there's no need for me to present such a valuable present to Elder Tian even if I attended his birthday banquet."

"Ah..." Hearing Huang Yu's words, Zhang Xuan immediately understood what was going on.

Indeed.

As a junior, even if she visited Elder Tian, she only had to prepare a novelty of some sort. There was no need for her to present a treasure like the Ink Daylily Canvas.

Naturally, she had done it in Liu shi's stead. As such, it was natural for the gift to be given to Elder Tian through Liu shi's hands.

"What about you? As Zhuang shi's student, there should be no need for you to prepare a gift in his stead, right?"

Bai Xun's relationship with Zhuang shi was different from the relationship Huang Yu had with Liu shi.

The latter was in an apprenticeship whereas the former was just a student. Even though the two of them sounded alike, the standing and identity of the two were on two different levels.

Huang Yu might have to look for a birthday present in Liu shi's stead, but as a student, there shouldn't be any need for Bai Xun to do the same.

"Actually... I..." Bai Xun scratched his head in embarrassment. "It is because Xiao Yu wanted the Ink Daylily Canvas that I asked for it as well. This way, I would have a reason to be with her... As for why I bought the painting from Master Zhang, it is for my father. He likes painting a lot as well..."

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

It turned out that this fellow only wanted the Ink Daylily Canvas to flirt with Huang Yu.

Just the thought of it was ridiculous.

However, his choice wasn't wrong. Only by competing with Huang Yu could he meet her every day. This way, it would make it easier for him to court her as well.

Just that, even though Bai Xun was interested in Huang Yu, the same could not be said about the latter. Most likely, the fellow was destined for heartbreak.

Bai Xun was just a student of Zhuang shi. There was no need for him to present a painting of the fifth level to Elder Tian. As an esteemed noble of the country, it wasn't difficult for him to find another suitable gift. As a result, Elder Tian only had the painting of the wild deer, and the other one was still in Bai Xun's possession.

"Master Zhang, I thought you didn't know anything about the Way of Tea. Then how did you..." After a while, when Hongtian Academy was already in sight, Huang Yu couldn't help but ask.

That fellow had clearly shown his ignorance in the subject earlier, and it didn't seem like he was faking it. Yet how did he manage to point out the mistakes in Tian Long's and Elder Tian's Ways of Tea, even completely impressing Elder Tian?

"It's true that I didn't know anything about it..."

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Even though there were many books regarding the Way of Tea in his head, he hadn't had the chance to browse through them yet. As a result, it wasn't a lie to say that he didn't know anything about the topic.

"Then..."

Huang Yu and Bai Xun were confused.

If you don't know anything about the subject, how could you speak so confidently and stump them with your words?

Shouldn't you come up with a better lie than that?

"I just happened to flip through a few books on the Way of Tea in the past and freely spoke of them. It was a coincidence that I managed to guessed them correctly!" Zhang Xuan replied casually.

"Freely spoke of them?"

Bai Xun and Huang Yu stared at each other speechless.

Brother, if you don't want to tell us the truth, just say so. You won't fool anyone with that ridiculous excuse of yours.

Do the two of us look like fools to you?

"Since we've arrived at the academy, I'll be bidding you two farewell!"

Even though the duo clearly didn't believe his words, Zhang Xuan couldn't be bothered to explain to them. With a smile, Zhang Xuan hopped off the carriage.

He had finally arrived at Hongtian Academy.

After a few days of absence, he was curious to see how far Zhao Ya and the others had progressed.

Chapter 208

Ink

The Hongtian Academy was bustling with people.

The Freshmen Tournament was about to begin.

Ten thousand students had been enrolled in the academy, and after half a month of study, it was time to check on the results of their training.

"Who do you think will be first place in the tournament this time?"

"I still think it's the person who got number one during the entrance examinations. Right after enrolment, his cultivation reached Fighter 2-dan. A month has passed since then, so he should be much stronger by now."

"The Freshmen Tournament isn't just reliant on strength. Besides, even if he was strong before his enrolment, it doesn't mean that he will still be strong now. I've heard that the few new students under Lu laoshi who were going to participate in the Teacher Evaluation have all reached Fighter 2-dan. Furthermore, they weren't his direct disciples. It will be hard to tell whether he can beat them!"

"But that guy is a student of Lu laoshi too, right? Seems like even if first place isn't that guy, it should be someone under Lu laoshi's tutelage."

"Of course! Of the top five hundred in the entrance examination, at least three hundred of them have come under Lu laoshi's tutelage. Even if they don't want to get first place, there must be someone that can match up to them first!"

"By the way, who do you think will win in the Teacher Evaluation? Zhang Xuan laoshi or Lu laoshi?"

"Win? Are you stupid? Does that question even need to be asked? In what way is Zhang Xuan laoshi qualified to compete against Lu laoshi? Even if the Education Bureau had intentionally suppressed him, causing his Teacher Qualification Examination results to be reflected wrong, his result in the past year wasn't terrific either!"

"Th-that's true!"

"See! To tell you the truth, I heard that the fellow intentionally provoked Lu laoshi to make fame for himself. After causing his student's cultivation to go berserk, he still dares to challenge Lu laoshi to a Teacher Evaluation... I really don't know how a person's skin can be so thick!"

...

"The news that I've heard is completely different from yours. I heard that Zhang Xuan laoshi is a noble person, and has already reached Pixue realm. In order to uphold the academy's prestige, he had been keeping mum about the matter, tolerating all of the insults by himself!"

"I've also heard that! Rumors have it that his student was afflicted with Innate Sealed Meridians, and he intentionally caused his student's cultivation to go berserk so that he could surpass his limits."

"That person is Zhao Yanfeng. I've met him a few times. Not only did Zhang laoshi help resolve his problem, he even helped him break through his cultivation. Right now, he's already a Fighter 2-dan expert. Grateful to Zhang laoshi, he wanted to go under his tutelage once more. This event incurred Lu laoshi wrath, resulting in Lu laoshi challenging Zhang laoshi to the Teacher Evaluation."

"Are you serious? Is that true?"

"It's definitely true. I heard this info from a friend I'm familiar with."

...

All kinds of discussions and theories floated around the place. Some said that Zhang Xuan overestimated himself, while others said that he was forced to accept the challenge. At this point, it was hard to tell what the truth was anymore.

Due to Yao Han's intentional spreading of the news of the Education Bureau, nearly everyone in the academy was aware of it now.

However, most of the students were still hesitant to believe it.

After all, Lu Xun's reputation in the academy was simply too great. Even though Zhang

Xuan had cleansed himself of the grief from scoring a zero in the Teacher Qualification Examination, it was hard for him to establish a towering image in the hearts of the students within such a short period of time.

However, Zhang Xuan wasn't bothered by this matter at all.

In any case, tomorrow's Teacher Evaluation would determine everything. Rather than wasting his time on this matter, he might as well focus on raising the strength of those students of his.

Soon he arrived at his classroom.

"Zhang laoshi!"

Zhao Ya and the others were all present. Each of them were spirited and emitted a powerful aura.

"Not bad!"

Seeing the status of his students, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

He was glad that he didn't waste his efforts.

Regardless of whether it was Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, Wang Ying, Liu Yang, or Yuan Tao, each of them had improved significantly. They were completely different from how they were half a month ago.

Not only this, even the students who had just listened in on the lessons—Wang Tao, Wang Yan, and Zhao Yanfeng—had also improved significantly.

Even though Zhang Xuan didn't conduct many lessons, every word in his lecture pointed straight toward the essence of cultivation. Learning under him helped them further comprehend cultivation as a topic, and naturally, this helped them raise their cultivation faster.

"What is that?"

After praising them, just when Zhang Xuan was about to start meeting them one by one, Zhang Xuan suddenly caught sight of something in the corner of the room.

There were a few pots placed by the side and the contents inside them were all pitch-black. Perplexed, Zhang Xuan asked them.

He clearly remembered not seeing such an object in the classroom before.

"Zhang laoshi, it is ink," Wang Ying's face flushed as she said softly.

"Ink?" Zhang Xuan was confused. "Why would there be a pot of ink in the classroom?"

What he taught was cultivation, not culture. There was no need for him or the students to paint beautiful ink paintings or write elegant calligraphy, so there was no reason for these objects to be in the classroom.

"That..."

Upon hearing his question, the several students fell into a silence of awkwardness.

"What's wrong? Could there be a reason behind this? Yuan Tao, speak!"

Seeing the bizarre expressions on everyone's faces, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up.

"I..."

Yuan Tao didn't expect Zhang laoshi to single him out and his face immediately scrunched up as though he had eaten a bitter gourd. After a moment of hesitation, he said, "It's like that. Due to the awakening of Zhao Ya xiaojie's Pure Yin Body, she has become even more beautiful. As such, many students wish to court her..."

"Court?"

Only then did Zhang Xuan realize the change in Zhao Ya's appearance from the awakening of the Pure Yin Body. Regardless of whether it was her looks or her nature, she seemed completely different from before. Compared to the domineering young mistress in the past, she was now an elegant young lady.

In terms of appearance, she was superior even to Shen Bi Ru. It was no wonder that other students started to admire and approach her.

"So if someone comes to find her... what is the purpose of the ink?" Zhang Xuan was even more perplexed.

Even if Zhao Ya became prettier and other men came to pester her, it would suffice to chase them away. In the academy, it was unlikely for them to go too far.

Besides, the strength of his students had risen greatly. If someone tried to harass Zhao Ya, they would likely leave with a swollen face.

By no means were Zheng Yang, Liu Yang, and Yuan Tao people who would allow others to climb over their head. It was impossible for them to watch obediently as others tried to poach Zhao Ya over to their sides.

"This... We have chased away all of the students, but..." Yuan Tao scratched his head as he laughed awkwardly. "But recently, three perverted old men had been loitering around the classroom. Based on their movements, we wouldn't be able to defeat them. So we prepared some ink to pour on them! It's rumored that ink can vanquish lust, and after they had been splashed by this ink, those three perverted old men should feel embarrassed to continue loitering here..."

"Perverved old men?" Zhang Xuan was perplexed. "Are you sure that they aren't teachers of the academy?"

"I'm sure that they aren't. I know all of the teachers in the school, but there aren't any teachers with appearances like theirs. Just by looking at their leering faces, I'm sure that they are up to no good!" The one who spoke this time was Zheng Yang. "I kept seeing them hiding in the corner in the past few days, pointing to Zhao Ya and Wang Ying, discussing them. Sometimes, they even nodded their heads while smiling. I am sure that they are up to no good."

"Pointing to Zhao Ya and Wang Ying and discussing them? When did such shameless fellows appear in the academy?"

From the confidence in his student's tone, Zhang Xuan didn't think that he was lying. His forehead wrinkled.

For old men to be peeping on and discussing sixteen, seventeen-year-old girls... They were indeed lecherous.

"Alright!"

Zhang Xuan also agreed with their opinions that the old men were up to no good and nodded his head. "You all should be on guard. Zhao Ya and Wang Ying, don't go out by

yourselves for the next few days. If you meet those three old men again, feel free to use the ink to splash them!"

Since they were able to get into the academy, they probably had esteemed identities. It was already embarrassing for them to be stalking young girls in public, and if they were to be splashed with ink, they should probably understand how shameful their actions were and leave of their own accord.

Of course, he would try to remain in the academy for the next two days. If the old men were to strike once more, he didn't mind teaching them a lesson personally.

"Hooray for Zhang laoshi!"

"I've already said that Zhang laoshi is an understanding person and he wouldn't blame us for that..."

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan approving their actions, the students cheered happily.

"Mm, alright, let's get down to business. Yuan Tao, follow me in first. I'll take a look at how your cultivation is going."

The Teacher Evaluation was tomorrow. So Zhang Xuan needed a clear idea of the current strength of his students by today. At the same time, he could offer them some instruction. Perhaps, through this, they would improve a bit more before the duel with Lu Xun's students.

Even if it was just a mild improvement, it might just be the determining factor in the battle.

The duo walked into the partitioned room and Yuan Tao closed the door behind him. After which, Zhang Xuan gestured. "Show me your battle technique."

"Yes!" Yuan Tao nodded his head. His fist shot out, making the wind howl. The might behind his fist was astonishing.

Even though his cultivation didn't improve greatly, still in Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm intermediate stage, his strength was astounding. That punch of his had caused a sonic boom.

"This strength..."

Zhang Xuan was surprised.

His ability to produce a sonic boom with his fists meant that his strength and defensive ability had reached astonishing levels. Even Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm cultivators might find it difficult to endure a punch with that power.

"As expected of the Emperor's Bloodline. Even though only ten percent of it has been awakened, it is still able to induce such an incredible growth in strength and defense!"

The unique constitutions were indeed extraordinary, befitting of their enormous reputations.

Even though Yuan Tao's cultivation was still the lowest among his five students, his offensive and defensive abilities were extremely fearsome.

"Your cultivation still isn't good enough. Whenever you cultivate and gather spiritual energy, you are too focused on the absorption of spiritual energy, thus failing to align your physical condition along with it. I will impart you with a cultivation method now. As long as you cultivate with it, it shouldn't be difficult for you to reach Juxi realm advanced stage today," said Zhang Xuan, after taking a single look.

After the other party had executed his punching routine, a new book on Yuan Tao formed in his head. After reading through the contents within, Zhang Xuan gained a clear idea of the problems and flaws in Yuan Tao's cultivation.

"Yes!" Yuan Tao hurriedly nodded his head and turned his attention to memorizing the cultivation method. It didn't take him long before he remembered the entire formula.

"OK, call Zhao Ya in."

After instructing Yuan Tao on what he should do, Zhang Xuan waved him out.

Soon, Zhao Ya walked in.

The Pure Yin Body was indeed incredible. Upon its awakening, Zhao Ya exuded the disposition of a fairy from the upper realms who had descended onto the mortal world.

Not to mention, Zhao Ya was originally a beautiful maiden. With the augmentation from her constitution, every single movement of hers exuded indescribable grace.

"Given her looks and nature, any male students matched against her will immediately admit his defeat upon seeing her smile."

The heavens were indeed unfair. Given Zhao Ya's outer appearance, if her opponent was a male, he might not even try to lay his hands on her.

"Show me your battle technique!"

"Yes!" Zhao Ya nodded her head, clenched her fist, and punched out.

Huhuhu!

The sound of wind filled the entire room.

"Your strength..."

After a book was formed in the library, Zhang Xuan flipped it open and took a look. The next instant, his eyes widened in disbelief.

How... could this be possible?

Huala! Boom!

"What are you all doing?"

"The nerve!"

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to speak, he heard the sound of a pot shattering. After which, furious roars resounded.

"What's going on?"

Frowning, Zhang Xuan immediately walked out of the room.

Chapter 209

Poison Hall

It was already chaotic outside. Zheng Yang was wielding a spear whereas Wang Ying was in a battle stance. Meanwhile Yuan Tao was carrying the tables and chairs in the classroom, glaring fiercely at the intruders.

At the entrance of the classroom, ink was splattered all over the floor. There were three fellows who were drenched black standing at the entrance, fuming.

Clearly, just when they were about to enter, Zhang Xuan's students immediately threw ink at them.

"Zhang laoshi, these are the three shameless men who had been peeping on us everyday..."

"To still be peeping on girls at your age, don't you feel embarrassed?"

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan walk out, Yuan Tao and Liu Yang hurriedly shouted at the trio.

However, before they could finish speaking, they saw the mouth of the usually calm Zhang laoshi twitch, then his entire body staggered, and it seemed as though he was about to fall to the ground.

"Liu shi, Zhuang shi, Zheng shi... Why are you all here?"

Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears.

Back then, when he heard his students say that there were three lecherous old men hiding by the corner peeping on them, Zhang Xuan took their words as truth. Never in his wildest dreams could he have expected that it would be the three master teachers.

As master teachers... they could just walk in through the front door to look for me. Disguising themselves and hiding in the corner, what were they up to?

Due to that, a misunderstanding arose and they were splattered with ink, causing this awkward situation...

Not just that, they were even criticized as shameless and lecherous...

"Liu shi?"

"Zhuang shi?"

"Zheng shi?"

Hearing the words that Zhang laoshi uttered, Zheng Yang, Zhao Ya, and the others staggered.

The three master teachers arriving at the capital was a huge affair, and the students in Hongtian Academy had already long since heard of the event. Naturally, they also knew of their names as well.

Initially, they thought that the few old men who had come to peep on them were just lewd perverts who were lusting over Zhao Ya's beauty. To think that it would actually be the famous three master teachers in the capital...

Weren't master teachers supposed to be prestigious figures who were difficult to even catch a glimpse of?

Why did they suddenly appear here and stalk them?

"Zhang laoshi, are you mistaken? Where can one find master teachers who act so pervertedly, wearing these kinds of clothes and hiding in the corner, afraid of us noticing them?" Zheng Yang couldn't help from saying.

"Mistaken?"

Zhang Xuan nearly choked on his spit.

The hell, what was with the students he was teaching!

Other people usually brought trouble to their father and their grandfather. Yet his students were clearly intent on preparing his grave for him.

The other party were all master teachers. With a single stomp of their legs, even Emperor Shen Zhui would cower in fear. Yet, not only did you all not apologize after splattering ink on them, you even said that they were perverted...

Perverted your head!

Frankly, I really want you all to admit that it was your fault. This way, the problem can be settled easily.

How do you expect me to deal with such a situation?

Zhang Xuan felt so depressed that he could cry. On the other hand, the three master teachers felt so infuriated that their lips were twitching nonstop. They felt so humiliated by this affair that the thought of suicide passed through their minds.

Right after leaving Elder Tian's residence, they immediately rushed to the academy and headed to Zhang Xuan's classroom. Yet the moment they walked in, they saw pitch-black ink flying right at them. Stunned by the sight before them, they didn't even have the time to react...

The hell is going on?

'We are master teachers. Regardless of where we go, we are influential figures who are held in high regard. Yet why were we splashed with ink here? Why are we treated as perverts here?

'If word spreads, how can we face others?'

"Zhang laoshi, I am certain that it is the three of them. In the past two days, they have been loitering around the classroom, peeping on us. I find it hard to believe that they don't have any bad intentions in mind..."

Afraid that Zhang laoshi might not believe Zheng Yang's words, Wang Ying added on.

"I can also vouch for it! Even if they were reduced to ashes, I would recognize them!" Liu Yang said decisively.

"Shut your traps!"

Seeing how these students were so unreliable and getting worse with their words,

Zhang Xuan couldn't stand it any longer.

After bellowing at his students, he mustered his courage and walked up. "Master teachers, I apologize for bringing you all trouble. I will teach them a lesson later..."

"There's no need to worry about it!"

"The ignorant aren't guilty..."

"Forget it, it's our mistake as well!"

Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and Zheng Fei squeezed out smiles on their crying faces.

"Yuan Tao, Zheng Yang, hurry up and buy some clothes for the three master teachers."

Seeing that the trio didn't intend to pursue this matter, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. Kicking Yuan Tao and Zheng Yang's rears, he roared.

"Yes, yes!"

At this moment, everyone finally understood that these three lecherous old men were true master teachers. Their faces immediately turned green with fear.

There wasn't anyone in this world who didn't know how fearsome a master teacher was. Yet they threw ink in the faces of three master teachers instantly, reducing them to such states...

They truly felt like crying now.

But... it really wasn't intentional.

Who could have thought that noble master teachers would disguise themselves and loiter around their classroom to peep at them, even talking about them?

"This... Master teachers, have you been hanging around here for the past few days?" asked Zhang Xuan after getting a towel for the trio to wipe away the ink from their faces.

As master teachers, instead of indulging yourselves in the luxuries in the royal palace, why would you all come here?

Even if you want to take me as your apprentice, upon knowing that I'm not here, there shouldn't be any reason for you all to be hanging around my students, talking about them.

"We... we..."

Hearing Zhang Xuan's straightforward words, the three master teachers' mouths opened, but they couldn't say a single word due to awkwardness.

What could they say?

That they'd heard of his deeds, and that they wanted to see it for themselves?

Peeping on his students to gather information on him... They would have to abandon their prestige as master teachers to say such words!

"I have an old friend in Hongtian Academy and he happened to be free the past few days. So we've been coming around to see him. Also, the atmosphere is not bad, so... we thought that it would be good to spend our time here," the quick-witted Zheng Fei said with a smile.

"Atmosphere is not bad?"

Zhang Xuan looked at them with strangely.

He had seen people who could speak lies with a straight face, but he had never seen someone who could spout such an obvious lie so brazenly.

'My classroom is at the very corner of the academy, the worst location in the compound. How inexperienced of the world must you be to think that the atmosphere is not bad?

'Besides, do you have friends in Hongtian Academy?

'Why haven't I heard of it?

'If you really have friends here, you would have come much earlier than this!'

"Oh, is that the case? My students are still inexperienced, that's why they thought that you were up to no good. Please pay them no heed..."

In order to prevent the atmosphere from turning awkward, Zhang Xuan didn't expose the blatant lie.

Soon, Yuan Tao and Zheng Yang returned with new clothes. After the three master teachers changed into them, they felt much more comfortable.

"Zhang laoshi, you should probably know the reason why we came to look for you?"

Regaining the disposition of a master teacher, Liu Ling looked at the young man before him with a smile.

After the past few days of observation, they were extremely pleased with both Zhang laoshi and his students. They would have truly won the lottery if they could accept an apprentice of such caliber under their wings.

Knowing that the three of them were true master teachers, the several students immediately focused all of their attention onto the conversation between them to see what was going on.

"I can roughly guess. The three master teachers hope to take me in as your apprentice, right?"

Knowing that he had to face this sooner or later, Zhang Xuan dived right into the subject.

"Apprentice?"

"The three master teachers want to accept Zhang laoshi as their apprentice?"

"If Zhang laoshi accepts it, he would be an assistant master teacher?"

...

Upon hearing those words, the faces of Zhao Ya and the others immediately flushed with excitement.

The dream of all teachers was to become a master teacher, and the requirement of being an apprentice of a master teacher eventually turned out to be the barrier preventing them from attaining their dream.

Only when one became a master teacher's apprentice would one have the chance to become a master teacher.

Instead of finding Lu Xun laoshi, the three master teachers came straight for Zhang laoshi. How could they not be excited?

"Mhm, that's right. The three of us have such an intention. You can feel free to choose whomever you wish to join!"

Upon seeing that the other party understood the situation, Liu Ling nodded his head with satisfaction.

"Feel free to choose whomever he wishes to join?"

His students were so excited they wanted to jump up and down.

That's to say that all three of the master teachers had their sights set on Zhang laoshi?

"This..." Zhang Xuan scratched his head embarrassed. "May I reject the offer?"

Putong! Putong! Putong!

Zhao Ya and the others fell to the floor.

For someone to reject becoming the apprentice of a master teacher?

Surely we heard wrong!

"Reject?"

Unable to believe their ears, Liu Ling and the others were stunned.

"Yes!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Possessing the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan was destined for great heights. Honestly, Zhang Xuan found Liu Ling and the others... nowhere near good enough.

"We understand that we're being a little too rash on the matter, so you need not hurry to give us your reply. How about this, we'll give you some time to consider the matter. It isn't too late to reply to us tomorrow!"

Not expecting the other party to reject him, Liu Ling knew that he had been a little rash on this matter and smiled awkwardly.

"It's alright to answer tomorrow as well. Give it a good thought today. Without the identity of an assistant master teacher and a master teacher's recommendation, it is impossible for one to take the master teacher examination," Zhuang Xian added.

"Indeed. Given your capability and your talents, it is a waste if you don't become a master teacher..." Zheng Fei chirped in as well.

"Oh... I will think over the matter then!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Zhang Xuan had decided to take the master teacher examination, but he was reluctant to acknowledge any of these three fellows as his teacher.

It wasn't for any other reason...

Than because these three had been trying to become Yang shi's students.

They were giving their all to become his students while trying to take Zhang Xuan as their student... What in the world was this...

"Mm! That's good. We'll come over tomorrow then."

Seeing that the other party didn't directly reject them, they heaved sighs of relief.

"Right, Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Liu shi, I happen to have a question to ask you three."

Seeing that the other party didn't persist on the matter, Zhang Xuan thought of the poison aura in his body and opened his mouth to ask the question.

"Oh? Feel free to speak of whatever it is that's on your mind! As long as it's something we know of, we'll try our best to help you." Liu Ling stroked his beard.

"Since that's the case, I would like to ask where I can find books on **【Poison】**. The more, the better," Zhang Xuan spoke.

As Zhang Xuan had no idea what the poison aura in his body was, it would be hard for him to ask the master teachers about it. Also, it might also result in unnecessary trouble, so he might as well just ask them for books.

In any case, as long as there were sufficient books on poison, through the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan should be able to easily find out what poison it was, and solving the problem would be simple then.

"Books regarding poison?"

Not expecting the young man before them to ask such a question, the three master teachers exchanged glances.

"In the field of poison, no one can surpass the 【Poison Hall】 !" After hesitating for a moment, Liu Ling said this with a grim expression.

"Poison Hall?"

Zhang Xuan was confused.

Even though there were many books regarding poison in the Tianxuan Kingdom Book Collection Vault, there wasn't any record of such a location. Thus, this was the first time Zhang Xuan was hearing the term as well.

"Yeah, Poison Hall!"

Liu Ling nodded his head.

Chapter 210

Teacher Acknowledgement (First Half)

"Actually, the Poison Hall refers to the Poison Master Guild!"

"Poison Master Guild?" Zhang Xuan blinked his eyes blankly.

Since it's a guild, it should be called Poison Master Guild just like the Apothecary Guild, Blacksmith Guild, and Teachers Guild. Why would it be called the Poison Hall?

The name sounded eerie.

"Do you feel like since it's a guild, it should just name itself as a guild just like the others? Are you wondering why it would be called the bizarre name of Poison Hall?" Seeing through Zhang Xuan's doubts, Liu Ling explained, "Actually, this has something to do with the identity of Poison Masters.

"Poison Masters are adept in utilizing poison. Often, their means can get through the guard of others, inducing massive fear against them. Reviling their underhanded means, they are classified in the Lower Nine Paths. On the other hand, due to their fearsome means, countless experts of the continent allied together to deal with the Poison Master Guild. Back then, when the guild was destroyed, countless poison masters died in the ordeal.

"Afterwards, even though they had managed to pass down their heritage, in fear of the same thing occurring to them once more, they dared not appear in the world. As a result, they secretly formed the Poison Hall and hid amid the mountains and rivers. This is precisely the reason why even though there are poison masters, they are hard to find within the kingdom. If one has to speak of a place which has the most books on poison, it has to be here. It's just that even I cannot confirm its exact location."

Liu Ling shook his head.

"Ah..."

Zhang Xuan smiled wryly.

In the end, Liu Ling's words turned out to be pointless.

What Zhang Xuan needed now were books on poison. If he was unable to find the Poison Hall, there wasn't any point listening to all of this.

"Playing with poison is extremely dangerous. Many poison masters, in order to concoct more potent poisons, often use their own bodies as test subjects. As such, very few of them live for long. Very few people want to come into contact with poison without sufficient reason. Zhang laoshi, may I know what you intend to do by asking for books of this kind?"

The three master teachers were perplexed.

Due to the lethal nature of poison, unless one possessed a great hatred for someone stronger than them and needed the strength of poison to exact their vengeance, very few people would dabble in it.

Even if people didn't try the poison they concocted for themselves, coming into contact with poison daily would also result in minute doses of it being absorbed into their body daily. Eventually, it would accumulate, so most poison masters couldn't live for long. This had also caused most of their personalities to be eccentric.

It could be said that just speaking of this occupation was sufficient to leave people apprehensive. Very few people would be willing to come into contact with it. This Zhang laoshi refused to become their apprentice and asked them about this matter instead. The master teachers couldn't stop from feeling curious about this matter.

"I am just asking out of curiosity." Zhang Xuan smiled.

He couldn't speak about the matter of him being poisoned. Otherwise, it would lead to questions like "Why isn't the poison acting up?" or "Why is your zhenqi so pure?" and eventually, it might expose the existence of the Library of Heaven's Path.

This item was his greatest secret, and he would never tell anyone about it.

Seeing that the other party was unwilling to say anything about the matter, Liu Ling asked no further either. After pondering for a moment, he added, "Actually, even though I don't know the exact location of the Poison Hall, I've heard that there is a Poison Hall branch in the Red Lotus Ridge, which is in the extreme northwest of Tier 1 Tianwu Kingdom. Of course, this is only hearsay. As for whether there is truly a

branch there, I can't really confirm it."

"Tier 1 Tianwu Kingdom?" Zhang Xuan nodded his head. A book regarding the country appeared in his head.

If they had a 1-star master teacher backing the country, it would be eligible to be ranked as a Tier 2 Kingdom.

Given how Tianxuan Kingdom had no master teachers at all, it could only be considered as an unranked kingdom.

Tianwu Kingdom was the strongest kingdom of the surrounding territories reaching the level of Tier 1. It was even higher ranked than the Beiwu Kingdom Liu Ling came from. It was said that there was a 2-star master teacher backing the country.

This country wasn't too far from Tianxuan Kingdom. They could even be considered as close neighbors since they both bordered the Red Lotus Ridge.

"Other than the Poison Hall, the Master Teacher Pavilion also has books on all occupations. Plenty of them are on poison too. Even though the quantity and quality can't be compared to the former, the size of its collection far exceeds that of some countries. If you only wish to gain an understanding of the occupation, you should visit the Master Teacher Pavilion to take a look. But of course, if you wish to enter the book collection vault, you have to first pass the master teacher examination."

Zhuang Xian smiled. It seemed like he hadn't given up on the idea of having Zhang Xuan come under him as his apprentice.

"Master Teacher Pavilion?"

"Yeah. Even though master teachers come into the Teachers Guild in name, due to their prestigious identity, the guild isn't capable of interfering in their affairs. Thus, another autonomous organization was created to govern the master teachers and conduct examinations. It's known as the Master Teacher Pavilion."

Zhuang Xian added, "The Master Teacher Pavilion is actually just like any other guild. The treasures and secret manuals within are only accessible by master teachers. Its book collection vault contains the knowledge of countless occupations, so there's surely books regarding poison there."

"Oh!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

It seemed that if he wasn't able to find the Poison Hall, becoming a master teacher and entering the book collection vault of the Master Teacher Pavilion could solve his current problem too.

"Alright, we hope that you can give this matter more thought. Given your talent, as long as you study diligently, you will surely be able to become a master teacher one day. You shouldn't think too much about other things."

The four of them chatted awhile longer, but upon seeing that the young man seemed to be truly disinterested in becoming their apprentice, Liu Ling offered Zhang Xuan advice before leaving with the other two.

They knew that it was best to slowly convince a talented teacher like Zhang Xuan instead of pressuring him. Perhaps he might truly change his mind within a couple of days. If they were to keep persistently questioning him about the matter, it might have the opposite effect instead.

After the trio left, the several students immediately ran up to Zhang laoshi. Admiration glimmered in their eyes.

Did you see that? Other teachers would definitely lose their mind upon hearing that a master teacher wanted to accept them as their student, yet our Zhang laoshi simply rejected three master teachers calmly...

Isn't he too incredible!

"Don't give me those looks. I haven't settled the score with you all from the recent event!"

Zhang Xuan's complexion darkened.

These brats had actually said that the three master teachers were lecherous peeping toms. It was fortunate that it was only ink and the other party didn't intend to pursue the matter. Otherwise, even Zhang Xuan would be stumped by this problem.

After rebuking them, he went ahead to guide them one by one. After all was said and done, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of satisfaction.

Even though these fellows were mischievous and unreliable, they were extremely serious in their training, not slacking off in the least.

Other than Yuan Tao, his other students had all reached Fighter 2-dan Dantian realm.

Initially, he thought that the one who would improve the most would be Zheng Yang, but contrary to his expectations, it turned out to be the weak-looking Wang Ying.

In just a short few days, her cultivation had soared. Not only did she break through the Fighter 2-dan barrier, she reached the pinnacle of Fighter 2-dan intermediate stage, and she was currently just a step away from reaching advanced stage!

The rate of her improvement was nothing short of shocking.

Even though this lass may seem airheaded on the surface and she blushed easily when speaking with others, she actually possessed an extraordinarily determined will. When she hardened her resolve to accomplish something, not even Zhao Ya would be able to best her.

His other students had also done well.

However, that was to be expected. After all, he had imparted them with the cultivation techniques and battle techniques compiled by the library. If they were unable to achieve such a level of improvement, it would truly be embarrassing.

Through the library, Zhang Xuan could tell that his five students had been secretly cultivating a joint attack formation. Taking a single look, there weren't any disadvantages to the formation. Instead, it augmented their combined fighting power.

As long as they weren't fooling around, Zhang Xuan wouldn't interfere in their affairs.

Nurturing a student was different from raising a plant or a pet. A teacher ought to guide them onto the right path and impart them knowledge to help with their cultivation. Otherwise, if a teacher restricted them in whatever they did, they would lose their independence, becoming nothing more than puppets.

It was just like how the rote learning method in Zhang Xuan's previous life had killed the creativity of numerous children, mass producing adults who were only capable of testing well.

Right after finishing his lecture, Zhang Xuan would leave the classroom. In fact, there were times he would stay out for several days. While there were compelling reasons for his absence, Zhang Xuan wasn't being irresponsible. Rather, he was worried that if he kept interfering in their training, it might impede them from becoming true experts in the future.

A true teacher should impart knowledge and guide students, but not restrain them.

"In order to take the master teacher examination, I need to become an apprentice... But I don't want to acknowledge Liu Ling and the others as my teacher..."

After instructing his students one by one, Zhang Xuan fell into a dilemma once more.

Apprentice, master teacher; master teacher, apprentice. It felt cyclical, leaving Zhang Xuan with a splitting headache.

'Right, I can choose to become my own apprentice instead!'

After being conflicted for a period of time, a thought abruptly appeared in Zhang Xuan's mind.

Other than Zhang Xuan, wasn't he "Yang shi" as well?

In the minds of others, Yang shi was a master teacher as well. If Zhang Xuan became his apprentice, wasn't he also qualified to take the master teacher examination? Even if Yang shi was unable to provide a recommendation letter for him, he could ask Liu Ling and the others to do so in his place.

When "Yang shi" asks for a favor, who wouldn't comply?

"I'll do it that way then!"

Chuckling softly, Zhang Xuan left the academy and headed toward his mansion.

If he wanted to become Yang shi's apprentice, "Yang shi" had to speak.

.....

Leaving the academy, Liu Ling and the others smiled bitterly at their failure of being unable to take Zhang Xuan as their apprentice.

Putting aside a remote country like Tianxuan Kingdom, even in Beiwu Kingdom and Hanwu Kingdom, as long as they showed the slightest bit of intention of taking an apprentice, countless star teachers would come fighting for the position.

Yet they had revealed their intentions clearly to this fellow, only to be rejected by him... They very much so wondered what was in his head.

"To be able to reach an astounding level of mastery in painting, pill forging, and the Way of Tea at such a young age, it is natural for him to be complacent!" Liu Ling commented, remembering the varied and incredible feats the other party had done.

"Indeed! We need not hurry. Tomorrow is the Teacher Evaluation between him and Lu Xun. Perhaps he's thinking of achieving a flawless victory before coming under us. This way, it would be much more justified and glorious," Zhuang Xian guessed upon remembering the event.

"That's possible..."

The other two nodded their heads in unison.

The reason for his rejection might be due to this matter as well.

Otherwise, even if he was unwilling to become their student, would he be willing to give up on the opportunity to become eligible for the master teacher examination?

This was the pursuit of all teachers in the world. It was just like becoming an expert in the path of cultivation, it was something that no one in the occupation would be able to resist.

"We must come over to watch tomorrow's duel. However, before that... should we deal with our personal affairs first?" Liu Ling suddenly said.

"You mean... acknowledging Yang shi as our teacher?"

Zhuang Xian's eyes lit up.

It was impossible for a person to only have a single master in their entire life. This logic applied to master teachers too. Upon reaching higher levels, one could acknowledge another teacher to learn from them.

"Indeed. Since Yang shi was able to easily help Shen Hong and Zheng Fei achieve breakthroughs, it is clear that his methods are much more advanced than ours. If we can acknowledge him as our teacher, we might be able to break through our bottleneck and gain the qualification to become 2-star master teachers. In fact... we might even pass with a single attempt with his guidance!"

The more Liu Ling said, the brighter his eyes shone.

A good teacher would be beneficial to their future development.

After the past few incidents, Yang shi had fully displayed his extraordinary capabilities. If they could acknowledge him as their teacher, they might be able to reach greater heights...

Reaching the level in their dreams, but beyond their reach.

Chapter 211

Teacher Acknowledgement (Second Half)

"To qualify for the 2-star master teacher examination, besides possessing two supporting occupations, one's cultivation must also be at least of Zongshi realm. Throughout the years, we have visited countless experts to seek advice on our cultivation, but even so, we are unable to make the final breakthrough. Our only hope is with Yang shi!"

Zhuang Xian nodded his head as well.

When one becomes a Zongshi, his lifespan is increased. Just this in itself is an allure that no one is able to resist. Having been stuck in Half-Zongshi for a very long time, they had visited numerous 2-star master teachers, but even so, were unable to make that final leap forward.

A few days ago, when they witnessed Yang shi guide the dying Shen Hong to achieve a breakthrough, they could no longer hold themselves back.

Since Shen Hong was able to do it, they are definitely able to do it as well!

However, that is only if.... Yang shi is willing to guide them.

"No matter what, we should give it another try. Perhaps, we might be able to succeed."

Zheng Fei said.

Since the moment Yang shi assisted him to reach Half-Zongshi, the intention to acknowledge him as his teacher had already sprouted in him. But back then, his intentions were disregarded and he didn't dare to ask any further.

But now, even Liu shi and Zhuang shi are trying hard, so naturally, he can't lag behind them.

"Alright, let's go and take a look!"

As they thought of this, the three master teachers hesitated no more and headed straight for the mansion.

.....

"Brother Lu, I've bought the pills. Do you want to reconsider the matter? Are you really going to use it?"

In Lu Xun's classroom, Wang Chao stared at his good friend with worry.

Even though these pills can generate a massive boost in one's cultivation within a short timespan, there are heavy repercussions on the user's body.

"Don't worry, I know what I'm doing." Receiving the pills from his friend's hands, Lu Xun hesitated for a moment before commanding his students.

Shortly, the students, whose name were on the Teacher Evaluation name list, appeared before him.

Zhu Hong, Mo Xiao, Du Lei, Bao Chao, and Kong Jie!

"Teacher!"

These five stood erect before Lu Xun, and every single one of them exuded a deep and powerful aura. After half a month of cultivation, just like Zheng Yang and the others, they had all reached Fighter 2-dan Dantian realm.

However, unlike Wang Ying and the others, they had all reached Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm pinnacle, even before they acknowledged Lu Xun as their teacher, and all they were lacking was just an impetus for their breakthrough.

Even Kong Jie, who is slightly inferior to the other four, with various resources focused on him, managed to achieve a breakthrough.

"Here is a pill. Consuming this pill expands your dantian, allowing you to achieve a breakthrough by tonight to reach Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm! This way, you will definitely be able to achieve victory in the Teacher Evaluation."

Lifting the pills in his hands, Lu Xun scanned the faces of his students. Without hiding anything, he spoke of the flaws of the pill as well.

"However, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Since it is able to help someone achieve a breakthrough so quickly, naturally, there are side effects. After reaching Zhenqi realm, your cultivation speed will be decreased to be 70% of what it was previously."

"However, as long as I become a master teacher, I will make sure to resolve this issue. I will even accept you as my direct disciples and oversee your training personally."

"Of course.... The choice is up to you. I will not force any of you. If you were to lose, it will only mean that our relationship as teacher and student has come to an end!"

After which, he placed the pill down and looked at them.

Even though he had made his choice and bought the pills, he nevertheless left the final decision in the hands of his students. He desired victory but was still unable to bring himself to force his students to consume the pills against their will.

There is a boundary that teachers should never cross.

Teachers have their own dignity as well.

Having taught innumerable students over so many years, he couldn't bear to stoop to such unscrupulous means for victory.

"I believe in Lu laoshi." Without hesitating for long, Zhu Hong stepped forward.

Training by the conventional route, it is nigh impossible to reach Zhenqi realm without two to three years of effort. If this pill can allow one to achieve it in a single night, so what if their future cultivation will be affected?

Who can guarantee that their cultivation would be smooth-sailing?

Furthermore, once they become a direct disciple of Lu laoshi, this won't be a problem.

When studying under the same teacher, there is a huge difference between a normal student and a direct disciple.

Usually, when a teacher imparts knowledge, it was done with hundreds of people in attendance. Thus, it is impossible to offer pointers tailored to personal needs to every single student. In the case of normal students, they will have to undergo trial and error

in order to find their way forward. It is as though a huge pot of vegetable being seasoned with the same seasoning, the flavor will only be average at best.

However, being a direct disciple is different. It is as though a vegetable specially cooked in a small pot. His teacher holds personal consultations, offering one pointer so that he will not waste his time on useless things. Even if the pill does affect their growth, with this kind of guidance, they will still be in for a bright future.

Thinking of this, Zhu Hong made a stand and swiftly swallowed the pill.

The pill, upon being placed in his mouth, melted immediately, turning into a surge of unique energy which gushed through his meridians.

Seeing that Zhu Hong had made his decision so quickly, Lu Xun nodded his head in satisfaction. He placed his hands on the other party's back and slowly infused zhenqi into the other party's body, guiding this surge of energy.

After an unknown period of time, with a crisp sound, Zhu Hong stood up abruptly, exhaled a mouthful of turbid breath, and the aura he exuded amplified greatly.

Fighter 3-dan, Zhenqi realm!

Just as Lu Xun had said, consuming the pill raised his cultivation by an entire level.

"Incredible.... I want to give it a try as well!"

Witnessing the person achieve a breakthrough successfully, Mo Xiao, Du Lei, Bai Chao, and Kong Jie could no longer hold themselves back and walked forward simultaneously.

The rest of them had made up their minds as well.

If Lu laoshi really becomes a master teacher, as his direct disciple, their standing would definitely soar by leaps and bounds. With that in mind, they chose to take the pill as well.

Soon, all of them reached Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm.

"Good, good!"

Seeing that all five students had reached Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm, Lu Xun's eyes gleamed with excitement.

Putting aside the freshmen, their current strength would allow them to compete even against top students who had been in the academy for several years.

"Tomorrow will be the day where I, Lu Xun, perform before everyone else. I shall astonish the entire academy and silence all of those discussions behind my back!"

Clenching his fists tightly, Lu Xun regained the confidence which he lost during the day and roared mightily.

So what if he is skilled in the Way of Tea? So what if he is a grandmaster painter?

As a teacher, I, Lu Xun,... am not inferior to anyone!

You three master teachers, I will show you tomorrow that I am the best choice you can make!

.....

"Old master, the three master teachers have been waiting for you for a very long time."

Returning to the residence, Sun Qiang immediately stepped forward to welcome Yang shi.

"They're here?"

He was considering whether to send someone to invite them, but it turned out that the three fellows were even more enthusiastic than him. Zhang Xuan chuckled lightly.

Walking into the lounge, he saw the three master teachers seated, and upon seeing Yang shi enter the room, their eyes glittered with excitement.

"Liu Ling (Zhuang Xian, Zheng Fei) pays respect to Yang shi!"

The trio bowed immediately.

"May I know what you three have for me, visiting me at such a late hour?"

Zhang Xuan sat down and instructed for a cup of tea. After a long and slow sip, he finally turned to look at them, his expression impassive.

After a trip to the Tian Residence and the academy, the sun had already set by the time Zhang Xuan arrived at the mansion.

"Yang shi, the three of us earnestly wish to acknowledge you as our teacher, and we hope that you can accept us!"

Liu Ling and the others quickly stood up, clasped their hands, and bowed deeply. Anxious, they sneaked glances at Zhang Xuan.

Age doesn't determine knowledge. Even though they are significantly older than Yang shi, the other party is clearly more capable than them. Age isn't a determining factor for one to acknowledge a teacher.

"You wish to acknowledge me as your teacher?"

Lifting his cup, Zhang Xuan removed the floating tea leaves elegantly. Even as he spoke those words, there wasn't the slightest hint of emotion on his face.

After having disguised himself for the past few days, he is no longer the amateur whom anyone could see through easily. Every single movement of his carries authority and magnanimity.

The atmosphere in the room stilled.

"Yes. Even though the three of us aren't talented, we can serve by your side and share your burdens."

The breathing of the three master teachers hastened.

The last few time that they were here, they did express their intention to acknowledge Yang shi as their teacher, but they hadn't spoken of it clearly. Now that they've said it out loud, if they were to get rejected, it would be over.

"If I'm not wrong, the reason why you all wish to acknowledge me as your teacher is that your cultivation has reached a bottleneck, and you are unable to achieve a breakthrough. If you were to become my student, you might be able to make this final step and advance further."

Without even lifting his head, Zhang Xuan's voice was indifferent, as though a block of silent ice.

"Ah.... Yes!"

Having their intentions exposed, Liu Ling and the others blushed in embarrassment.

"Seems that you are honest!"

Seeing that they didn't deny the matter, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"We hope that Yang shi can fulfill our wish!"

Liu Ling and the others gritted their teeth.

Zhang Xuan didn't reply. Instead, he slowly put down his teacup, stood up, and walked to the center of the room.

The three master teachers were wondering what he was going to do when a calm voice suddenly sounded.

"I, Yang shi, have traveled and visited countless countries. I prefer to live a quiet and tranquil life, so I don't reveal my identity easily. You probably haven't heard of my name, even in the other countries, am I right?"

"Yes!"

When they heard the name 'Yang Xuan', they had specially looked into the matter, but there isn't such a person in the surrounding kingdoms. Back then, they thought that the latter was simply using this fake name to impersonate a master teacher, but from the looks of it now, it seems like Yang shi had just been keeping a low profile.

"If I don't want others to know that I am a master teacher, even if you were to check with the Master Teacher Pavilion, you won't be able to find anything."

Zhang Xuan said. "However, in Tianxuan Kingdom, I revealed my identity, even helping others with their problems. Do you know why?"

The reason why Zhang Xuan said all of that in advance was to lay the foundations so that they wouldn't doubt his identity. After all, the name 'Yang Xuan' is fake, and they

won't be able to find this name in the Master Teacher Pavilion if they were to check.

With these words, not only would the other party not doubt his words when they are unable to find it, they will even feel reverence for him.

For his identity to be unable to found in the Master Teacher Pavilion.... How incredible does he have to be?

"We apologize for our ignorance!"

Liu Ling and the others stared at Yang shi.

Actually, they had felt perplexed on this point as well.

If such an incredible master teacher really chooses to blend in with the crowd, who will be able to tell his true identity?

Yet, everyone in Tianxuan Kingdom found out about his identity.

"During my travel, I happened to meet a competent youngster. Very satisfied with him, I accepted him as my direct disciple. However.... I won't be staying here for long, and afraid that he might be oppressed by others, I revealed my status intentionally so as to give him a title."

With both hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan stood erect at the center of the hall, as though a towering mountain.

"A competent youngster? Accepted him as a direct disciple?"

Liu Ling and the others stared at one another. Suddenly, they thought of something and their eyes narrowed. "Can it be that.... Can it be that.... Yang shi's direct disciple is.... Hongtian Academy's Zhang Xuan laoshi?"

If that is the case, everything makes sense.

For a low-level teacher at a remote kingdom to be able to come up with such incredible theories and become a grandmaster painter, expert tea master, and more importantly.... reject the apprenticeship of the three master teachers.

Probably, only a student of Yang shi is able to do so.

Zhang Xuan was delighted to observe that the other side had caught quickly, and he was able to save his saliva, nodding his head in satisfaction.

"Un, Zhang Xuan is my direct disciple. If you want to come under my tutelage.... That would mean that he's your...."

"Senior!"

Chapter 212

The Teacher Evaluation Arrives!

"Senior?"

The mouths of the three master teachers twitched and their bodies swayed.

The twist came too abruptly.

They were thinking of accepting the other party as their apprentice when all of a sudden, he had become their senior.

To call a fellow who isn't even twenty their senior?

The three master teacher felt dizzy. They found the relationship extremely peculiar.

However, the bizarre expression on their face merely flickered on their faces for an instant. Agitation and excitement took over their expressions.

"Does Yang shi mean that.... you are willing to accept us?"

Liu Ling suddenly came to a realization. Trembling in agitation, his face creased so tightly together that it seemed to be able to squeeze a mosquito to death.

Since Yang shi had told them to address Zhang Xuan as their senior, doesn't this mean that he is willing to accept them as his student?

"Thank you, Yang shi!"

Zhuang Xian and Zheng Fei immediately knelt to the floor.

Even though the other party hadn't expressed his intentions clearly, he wasn't objectionable to the issue. If they don't hurry up and the other party changes his mind all of the sudden, won't they cry themselves to death?

"These two fellows...."

Seeing his old buddies react so quickly, Liu Ling quickly followed suit and knelt down as well.

Zhang Xuan didn't turn around, and his expression remained completely calm. "Since you have all become my students, I will assist you with your cultivation. However, I am used to wandering about and I won't be staying here for long. Even though Zhang Xuan is my direct disciple, he is way too young and his cultivation is still immature. He might require your assistance."

"Teacher, rest assured. Since we've come under your tutelage, we will definitely follow your rules. Given that Zhang Xuan is our senior now, as long as it is within our capabilities, we will make sure to assist him."

Liu Ling and the others expressed their sentiments.

There is a set of rules that when a master teacher accepts a disciple.

A direct disciple is a rank higher than that of normal students. That is to say, even if the direct disciple is the youngest of the lot, before the other students, he is still considered the senior. Even though it sounds peculiar, there had been many of such exceptions in the Master Teacher Pavilion, so it isn't anything significant.

Since they had decided to acknowledge Yang shi as their teacher, Zhang Xuan would naturally become their senior. Thus, as juniors, they wouldn't spare any effort to assist him.

"Un, show me your battle technique."

Having confirmed the teacher-student relationship with the trio, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

"Yes!"

Knowing that Yang shi was going to guide them on their cultivation, they stood up immediately and excitedly. It didn't take long before the rustling of wind sounded in the room as the trio displayed their battle techniques.

After an unknown period of time, the trio clasped their hands and took their leave. Even though they were still Half-Zongshi and they had yet to achieve a breakthrough, the excitement on their faces was almost impossible to hide.

Actually, Zhang Xuan was capable of helping the trio reach Zongshi realm on the spot, but if he were to do so, his pure zhenqi and low cultivation realm would be exposed. This could have potentially led to countless troubles in the future.

After some contemplation, he decided to simply point out the flaws in their cultivation.

In his words, having pointed out their flaws, and it is a trial to the trio to achieve a breakthrough with the new knowledge. As 1-star master teachers, if they are unable to achieve a breakthrough even after knowing all these, it would show that there are fundamental flaws in their talents, and he would have to reconsider his decision to accept the trio as his students.

Hearing those words, the three master teachers didn't dare to say anything. They listened attentively to the flaws the other party spoke of, afraid that they would mishear anything.

However, now that they know where their mistakes lie, given their knowledge and comprehension on cultivation, reaching Zongshi realm becomes only a matter of time.

"Old master, Emperor Shen Zhui is waiting outside."

Zhang Xuan was about to rest after dealing with the three master teachers when Sun Qiang came in with the report.

"He's here? Can it be...." Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. "Have him enter!"

"Yang shi!"

Soon, Emperor Shen Zhui walked in, clasped his hands, and bowed. His gaze was filled with passion and reverence.

Not only did he save the dying old ancestor, he even helped him reach Zongshi realm. Those feats are something that even a 2-star master teacher would find hard to accomplish.

Perhaps.... The person standing before him is a 3-star master teacher, or even someone much more incredible.

Even the emperor of a Tier 1 Kingdom would find it hard to meet someone of his caliber.

"Reporting to Yang shi, I have managed to gather the Tongxuan realm secret manuals that you had me collect...."

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

His condition for treating Shen Hong was for Shen Zhui to collect these Tongxuan realm cultivation technique manuals in his stead. It has been a few days since then, and given the influence of the royal family, collecting thousands of such books wasn't any issue.

"Yang shi, please look through them!"

As Shen Zhui gestured with his hand, thousands of books stacked up in a pile before him.

He brought all of the books in his storage ring.

"Un!"

Walking forward to pick up a few books, Zhang Xuan quickly flipped through them, placed them down, and proceeded to do the same with other books.

From the very start, when Yang shi had made such a request, Emperor Shen Zhui was already perplexed why such an incredible master teacher would need Tongxuan realm secret manuals. Upon seeing this situation, his confusion worsened.

If the other party opens the book and reads through them, Emperor Shen Zhui could have attributed the matter to him studying. But to flip through them just like that... What is he doing?

Even though Emperor Shen Zhui was perplexed, he didn't dare to mention anything. He stood obediently by the side, quietly observing.

Hualala, hualala!

In a single go, Zhang Xuan flipped through the thousands of secret manuals.

Even though the manuals gathered were rather average in standard, the quantity more than made up for it. Given that Zhang Xuan possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, it is the best situation that could have happened.

"Correct!"

With a jolt of his mind, the books converged to form a single entity in the library.

Tongxuan realm Heaven's Path Divine Art!

"Alright, I'm done. You can take them away!"

Zhang Xuan casually waved his hands.

Since he had already created replicas of all of the books in the library, there was no need for him to keep the physical copies.

"This...."

Emperor Shen Zhui was taken aback.

In order to gather all of these secret manuals, he had paid quite a substantial amount. Initially, he thought that Yang shi would at least take a look. In the end, he simply casually flipped through them and returned them to him....

"Are these books not to your liking? If so, I can search for more...."

After hesitating for a moment, Emperor Shen Zhui couldn't help but ask.

"There's no need. I'm already done reading these books, you can take them back."
Zhang Xuan casually waved his hands.

"Done.... reading these books?"

Emperor Shen Zhui nearly fell to the ground.

You.... you.... what can you possibly have read like that?

Casually flipping through those books like that, and you say that you are done reading them.... Do your eyes grow on your hands?

"Yes!"

Even though he felt so stifled that he could spurt blood, he dared not to question any

further. He kept all of the books in his storage ring, clasped his hands, and said, "Then, I'll be taking my leave...."

"Un!" Zhang Xuan casually waved him away.

Emperor Shen Zhui returned back to the royal palace immediately after leaving the mansion.

"Have you passed the books to Yang shi?"

Old Ancestor Shen Hong walked over.

"I passed him the books, but.... he didn't want them and.... he gave them back!" Even until now, Emperor Shen Zhui had maintained his confused expression.

"Gave them back? Is Yang shi unsatisfied with the books?"

"That's not it...."

"Then, has he finished reading them?"

"He didn't read through them at all...."

"Didn't read through them at all? Then, what did he want the books for?" Shen Hong was perplexed.

"He.... He.... simply fiddled around with it...."

"Fiddled?"

Shen Hong blinked his eyes.

I can understand if you wish to fiddle around with beautiful ladies, but why did you fiddle around with those books?

"Indeed, it is impossible for us to understand the minds of geniuses...."

After a contemplating over the matter for an extremely long time, they finally arrived at this conclusion.

.....

After Emperor Shen Zhui left, Zhang Xuan told Sun Qiang that he would not be seeing anyone else, before returning to his room.

"Time to cultivate!"

Zhang Xuan immediately turned his attention to the 7-dan Heaven's Path Divine Art which was just formed.

"The opening of acupoints, the connecting of the meridians, allowing zhenqi to flow without any hindrance, that is Tongxuan...."

The words appeared clearly in his mind.

As this version of Heaven's Path Divine Art was formed by compiling thousands of secret manuals together, there were no problems with it all. Zhang Xuan read and cultivated via the method explained within simultaneously.

Pure zhenqi began to circulate within his body, and according to the unique cultivation method written in the perfect manual, the zhenqi revolved unceasingly.

Boom!

With just a single circulation, he had barged through the bottleneck and spiritual energy in the air surged into his body with hysteria. His zhenqi and strength improved exponentially.

Tongxuan realm primary stage!

Tongxuan realm intermediate stage!

....

In no time, he had achieved Tongxuan realm pinnacle!

"Along with the rise in my cultivation, my speed of improvement is slowing...."

Feeling that his cultivation had reached another bottleneck, Zhang Xuan stopped.

As Zhang Xuan had to deduce the correct acupoints one by one in Pixue realm, it wasn't an accurate gauge of his cultivation speed. On the other hand, when he was at Dingli realm, cultivating via the complete version of Heaven's Path Divine Art, he took around two hours, but now....

"It took a whole ten minute longer. Looks like the higher one's cultivation reaches, the more difficult it is to cultivate!"

Zhang Xuan lamented with a grim expression.

If anyone else were to know his thoughts, they would definitely want to strangle him to death.

You call an additional ten minutes difficult?

Even top-notch geniuses, with the augmentation of countless treasures, to cultivate from Tongxuan realm primary stage to pinnacle would take a minimum of ten years of hard work. Yet, you only took ten minutes more than two hours and you think that your cultivation speed has slowed....

The heck, why don't you go and die!

"I should check out how much my strength has improved...."

Zhang Xuan stood up and walked over to the Strength Measuring Rock Pillar. Using just the strength from his zhenqi, he sent his fist into it.

Weng!

A line of numbers slowly floated into view.

"600 ding!"

A look of delight immediately appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

At Pixue realm pinnacle, he had opened 108 acupoints, granting him an additional 108 ding of strength. In addition to the previous 20 ding, he possessed a total of 128 ding of zhenqi strength.

Now that he has achieved a breakthrough, his strength increased by several folds.

Usually, a Tongxuan realm expert would possess 100 ding of strength at primary stage, 200 ding at intermediate stage, 300 ding at advanced stage, and 400 ding at pinnacle.

With a zhenqi strength of 600 ding, Zhang Xuan is able to match up to a Half-Zongshi.

A Zongshi expert wields tremendous strength, and their blows easily exceed a thousand ding. Those who possess strength between 400 ding and 1000 ding are known as Half-Zongshi.

If he were to add the 90 ding of strength from his physical body, his strength would almost reach 700 ding. With such strength, his prowess would be the top few even among Half-Zongshis.

"Finally, I possess the power to protect myself!"

Now that he has such commensurate and mighty power, coupled with his Library of Heaven's Path ability to see through flaws, he can finally stand against top-notch experts within the country. Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Even since he noticed the poison aura within his body, the fear that someone is trying to kill him had been plaguing his mind.

Without sufficient strength, if the enemy were to make another attempt, he definitely won't be able to resist. Now that Zhang Xuan holds strength comparable to a Half-Zongshi, he finally regained his sense of security.

After reinforcing his cultivation and adapting to his newfound strength, Zhang Xuan walked out of the room.

Unknowingly, a day had passed, and the sun was rising slowly from the east. Its radiance spilled over the horizon and scene of tranquility formed in the city.

"To think that it is already dawn...."

Looking at the rising sun, Zhang Xuan realized that the Freshmen Tournament and the Teacher Evaluation which he had waited for half a month....

Has arrived!

Chapter 213

The Shocked Qian Chao

Qian Chao is Pavilion Elder Qian's son. Initially, he had intended to slack off and take a good rest today, but his father forcefully dragged him to the Teacher Evaluation, filling him with resentment.

"Father, you could have just asked someone to report the result of the Teacher Evaluation. There isn't any need for you to come here personally!"

Indignance showed through Qian Chao's face, "No matter what, you're one of the few subjects whom His Majesty values highly. You didn't even attend the duel between the North Marquis and Swift General previously, so why would you spectate some trivial duels among students?"

He really couldn't understand his father's thoughts.

For a Pavilion Elder who doesn't even need to bow down to His Majesty, he was able to even skip attending a duel between tier-1 officials in the royal court. Yet, of all things he could have done, he chose to watch students battle one another.

Even though the teachers' prestige are at stake at the Teacher Evaluation, it is in actual fact just a few students fighting one another.... A matter of such level should just be left to his subordinates. Why does the commander-in-chief have to appear personally for such a small matter?

He would just scare others with his presence.

"This is a 3-star incident. I have to be here personally...." Pavilion Elder Qian replied.

"I know that it is a 3-star incident. Everything that concerns the academy will have the incident elevated by a single star, and Lu Xun laoshi is a star teacher, which adds another star. In truth, it is merely a 1-star incident...." Qian Chao curled his lips in disdain, thinking nothing much of this matter.

Under normal situation, 1-star incidents do not need to be reported to His Majesty. If

Pavilion Elder Qian were to personally attend to matters of such insignificance, won't he tire himself to death?

"This isn't that simple!" Pavilion Elder Qian harrumphed

"How complicated can the matter get? It is just a duel between students; I don't believe that the severity of the matter can get as serious as the duel between North Marquis and Swift General. You must know, back then, just the number of tier-2 officials who participated in the matter added up to a total of twelve. It is definitely the greatest duel of the year...."

Qian Chao still didn't think that this matter was worthy of such consideration.

The North Marquis and Swift General are tier-1 officials of the kingdom, and the news of the duel was announced beforehand. Countless experts went to spectate the match, but.... This old man of his refused to go, saying that the matter didn't have enough stars and wasn't worthy of his consideration....

Yet, he decided to watch the fight among a few students. Qian Chao started to doubt whether his father is getting senile.

"This morning, I received news that Clan Head Wang Hong of the Four Great Clans, Clan Head Bai Ming, and the elders of both clans had arrived at the Hongtian Academy. This shows how much they value this matter. Do you think that there is no reason for me to be here?"

Pavilion Elder Qian said.

"Clan Head Wang Hong is a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert. He is one of the most influential figures, even when considering the entire kingdom into account. Even though Clan Head Bai Ming's standing is beneath that of Clan Head Wang Hong, he is nevertheless an official apothecary and is of esteemed standing.... You say that they have come to the school to spectate the battle between a few students?"

Qian Chao didn't believe Pavilion Elder Qian's words.

Even though these two clan heads don't hold official positions, their true standing isn't inferior to tier-1 officials of the royal court. How can people of such esteemed standing be interested in a duel between mere students?

"Take a look yourself...."

After turning around a bend, they arrived at the Hongtian Academy dueling platform. The spectator stand was already packed with people.

Pavilion Elder Qian casually pointed.

"I doubt there will be many people in the VIP seats.... Ah?"

Muttering to himself, Qian Chao took a glance at the seats and his body froze in shock.

"Clan Head Wang Hong and Clan Head Bai Ming are really here.... That is.... Guild Leader Ouyang? Why is Guild Leader Ouyang of the Apothecary Guild here as well? There is also Apothecary Meng Yan, Apothecary Lin Mu, Apothecary Jin Chen.... This.... How can this be possible?"

Initially, he thought that mere duels among students wouldn't attract much attention. However, with a single look, not only did he notice a clan head of the Four Great Clans, more than ten apothecaries, including the guild leader of the Apothecary Guild, are present as well.

What is going on?

Apothecaries, as one of the top occupations among the Upper Nine Paths, possess noble standing. Even Emperor Shen Zhui finds it hard to arrange a meeting with a figure like Guild Leader Ouyang, yet he is here watching a bunch of kids fighting one another....

Unable to believe his eyes, he felt his head begin to spin.

"Not just them, look over there!"

Before he could recover from his shock, Pavilion Elder Qian pointed in another direction.

Looking toward the direction where the finger was pointed, Qian Chao shuddered once more. His mouth quivered in astonishment.

"The kingdom's number one physician, Master Yuanyu? That is.... Elder Tian? He didn't even appear for His Majesty's birthday banquet the last time, coming up with

various excuses. Yet, why.... why would he...."

A moment ago, Qian Chao was still thinking that his father is making a big fuss out of nothing. Yet.... He now finds himself nearly dying from overwhelming shock.

Master Yuanyu is a powerful figure that even His Majesty has to treat with utmost respect.

As for Elder Tian, even His Majesty finds it hard to obtain a single sip of the tea he brews. It is clear just how incredible his standing is.

Yet, two amazing figures stood patiently on the spectator stand, waiting....

Can anyone tell me what is going on?

Are you for real?

"Who are those sitting over there? Why did so many people give up their seats for them?"

"I have no idea as well. They are probably of high standing...."

He was about to die from shock when Qian Chao suddenly heard the students' exclamation. Lifting his head to take a look, he staggered once more.

"The three.... three master teachers? They.... They're here as well?"

What appeared in his vision were the three elders.

If the few people before had only caused him to be shocked, seeing the three master teachers here made him horrified.

They are master teachers!

They are incredible powers who can disregard his father altogether.

Yet, such figures.... just like the many others, are seated on the spectator's stand....

However, this wasn't the end. He soon saw two middle-aged men take a seat.

"They.... They.... Emperor Shen Zhui and City Lord Zhao Feng of Baiyu City?"

His throat felt dry.

He thought that it was embarrassing for his father to lower his status to attend such a lowly event. Yet.... Even His Majesty and City Lord Zhao Feng had come personally.

Baiyu City is the second largest city of Tianxuan Kingdom, and its city lord's position is second only to the emperor!

Is this really just a duel between students?

Even if the princes were to battle one another, it wouldn't be such a huge occasion!

"Actually.... The one who holds the most esteemed position among the crowd isn't His Majesty or the three master teachers, it is that person!"

Seeing his son getting so terrified over the figures who had appeared here, Pavilion Elder Qian spoke.

Qian Chao hurriedly looked over and saw an unimpressive plump man.

"He is...."

Knowing that his father has a huge intelligence network and it is impossible for him to say such words for no good reason, Qian Chao asked.

"He is.... Yang shi's butler, Sun Qiang! His presence represents Yang shi...." Pavilion Elder Qian said slowly.

"Represents Yang shi?" Qian Chao swallowed a mouthful of saliva. "The Yang shi who kept Emperor Shen Zhui at his entrance?"

Yang shi's affairs had spread like wildfire, and it was natural that Qian Chao had heard of it. Liu shi and the others had paid him a visit and admitted that they were inferior to him. Even Emperor Shen Zhui had to queue outside for an audience with him...."

For such an incredible master teacher to send his butler here....

Qian Chao's body trembled. He was unable to understand why the attention of so many

powerful figures were fixated on this duel.

"This.... Is this really a 3-star incident?"

"Even though it was classified as a 3-star incident, from the looks of it now, it is already a.... 5-star incident!"

A grim look appeared on Pavilion Elder Qian.

Only a 5-star incident can create such a huge commotion and attract so many noble figures.

"Can it be.... Lu Xun laoshi?"

After contemplating over the matter, Qian Chao asked with a trembling voice.

Lu Xun is a celebrity teacher, and his reputation resounds throughout the kingdom. Can it be his prestige which attracted so many people here?

And forcefully pulled a 3-star incident up to a 5-star incident!

"Him? I also find this matter peculiar. Even though he has a huge reputation, I don't think that he's sufficiently qualified. Right now, my doubts are on Zhang Xuan laoshi."

Pavilion Elder Qian hesitated for a moment before speaking.

It is true that Lu Xun is famous, but at the very most, he can only attract the attention of Wang Hong, Bai Ming, and a few others. It is impossible for Guild Leader Ouyang and the apothecaries to have come for him.

Needless to say, Emperor Shen Zhui, Elder Tian, and Yang shi's butler, Sun Qiang.

Since it isn't him, it has to be his opponent.

Zhang laoshi.... The teacher with a terrible reputation.

"Zhang Xuan...."

Hearing the unfamiliar name, Qian Chao was stunned.

If what his father said is true, then to be able to attract the presence of so many powerful figures for his affair....

How did that fellow do it?

He isn't the only one who is on the verge of going insane. The numerous teachers of the academy are also tugging at their hair frenziedly.

Are you sure that it isn't the principal dueling with someone else?

Otherwise, why would the emperor, three master teachers, Elder Tian, Master Yuanyu.... and so many amazing figures appear here?

Reverting back to his original look, Zhang Xuan led Zhao Ya and the others to the dueling platform. Looking at the crowd on the seats, the excited Emperor Shen Zhui and the others, a peculiar expression appeared on him.

"This is the Teacher Evaluation between me and Lu Xun. What are that bunch of fools.... doing here?"

Chapter 214

Yuan Tao VS Kong Jie

On the spectator stand.

A sliver of worry and agitation appeared on Shen Bi Ru's impeccable face.

After the Enlightenment Will Trial, she had matters to attend to and left Tianxuan Royal City. When she returned yesterday, she heard of the Teacher Evaluation immediately and nearly fainted from shock.

Is this Zhang Xuan insane?

Who is Lu Xun?

He is the living signboard for Hongtian Academy, a true celebrity teacher. To be pitting against him.... Does he wish to be shamed that much?

Moreover, he had specially poached several students to specifically counter Zhao Ya and the rest.

"Why are you that rash...."

Gritting her jade teeth tightly, Shen Bi Ru recalled what happened yesterday and felt even more stifled.

After knowing of the news, she went to find Zhang Xun to persuade him, but.... the other party was out!

She waited an entire night outside the other party's dormitory.... Yet, he didn't come back at all.

Tomorrow is the duel, and it is said that Lu Xun had spent the entire night tutoring his students, suffering from a lack of sleep due to that. Yet, you threw your students aside and stayed out....

Does anyone prepare for competitions the way you do?

Aren't you way too gutsy!

Or do you think that the situation is hopeless and that you have given up?

After the incidents at the Compendium Pavilion, Hongtian Pavilion, and Enlightenment Will Trial, she thought that even though Zhang laoshi had a terrible reputation, he is actually an extremely prudent person. Now, it turns out that....

Prudent your ass!

Who has ever seen a person disappearing for several days right before a competition?

"What exactly are you thinking? Why do you seem out of sorts the moment you return?"

She was burning with anger within when a beautiful face suddenly appeared before her.

The other stunner of the academy, Han Qiong!

Han Qiong is also a rare beauty. In terms of just her appearance, she is slightly inferior to Shen Bi Ru. However, she is currently twenty-five, the age where a woman's charm shines through. Considering her figure and her feminine charm, the latter would be far from a match.

As such, there are many followers of Han Qiong laoshi, and their numbers far surpass that of Shen Bi Ru's.

As top-class beauties, the two teachers have a good relationship in private and are bosom friends.

"Who else can it be except for that Zhang Xuan. God knows what that fellow is thinking of, to actually duel with Lu Xun laoshi!" Shen Bi Ru harrumphed furiously. "If he were to lose, the reputation which he had just built up would be tarnished, and his credibility would crumble!"

He had just proven at the Enlightenment Will Trial that the Education Bureau had framed him. If he were to lose in this duel, all kinds of rumors would be generated and

no one would believe his words anymore.

"From the looks of it.... It seems that you are concerned about him?"

Han Qiong chuckled. A sly grin flashed through her eyes.

"No one is concerned about him! He is just an arrogant fellow!" Shen Bi Ru harrumphed.

"It's good that you are unconcerned about him. I thought that our Great Beauty Shen had fallen in love!"

Han Qiong stretched her back, revealing an astonishingly voluptuous figure. Not lingering on the topic, Han Qiong asked curiously, "Oh right, say.... Who do you think will win the duel?"

"Zhang Xuan's five students, Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and the others are not bad. However, Lu Xun laoshi had made arrangements to specifically deal with each of them. Mo Xiao and the others are obviously their nemeses. I'm afraid that.... it is unlikely for Zhang Xuan to win."

Upon mentioning who would win in the Teacher Evaluation, the anger and stifled expression that Shen Bi Ru had before disappeared, and in its place is calmness and intelligence.

After hearing of the duel, she looked into the matter and found out about Lu Xun's arrangements.

That fellow's actions do indeed appear unscrupulous, but truthfully speaking, this is also the sign of an outstanding teacher.

Regardless of who one faces, he should give it his all and vie for all advantages he can possibly get. This is a basic quality that teachers and cultivators should have.

"Unless...."

At which, Shen Bi Ru paused for a moment. Wisdom reflected in her bright eyes and she said, "Zhao Ya and the others have reached Fighter 2-dan. Through the advantage in their cultivation, they might still be able to match up against Lu Xun's students!"

Lu Xun had specially found students to deal with Zhao Ya and the others. Unless the latter achieves a breakthrough, thus overcoming their opponents' advantages through sheer strength, it is nigh impossible for them to win.

"You're right!" Han Qiong nodded her head in agreement.

"Look, Zhang laoshi and his students have arrived...."

"What powerful aura! Zhao Ya and the others have actually reached.... Fighter 2-dan?"

"But.... It's impossible! Reaching Fighter 2-dan in half a month's time?"

....

The duo was discussing the Teacher Evaluation when a commotion suddenly broke out among the crowd. Following immediately, they saw Zhang Xuan walking up with Zhao Ya and the others following behind him.

At this moment, Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, Wang Ying, and the others were emitting exceptionally powerful auras. Every single gesture of theirs felt mighty and intimidating.

Fighter 2-dan!

Except for Yuan Tao, who is at Juxi realm advanced stage, the others have already reached Dantian realm!

"This...." Shen Bi Ru and Han Qiong's eyes lit up,

"Even though Zhang Xuan laoshi doesn't look reliable, it seems that he is nevertheless quite capable!" Han Qiong smiled.

"Except for Yuan Tao, who is slightly weaker, the others do possess a chance at victory...." Shen Bi Ru nodded her head in agreement. Halfway through her words, her face suddenly paled.

"What's wrong?"

Seeing her good friend fall into such a state, Han Qiong felt baffled.

"Lu Xun laoshi and his students have arrived!"

Shen Bi Ru clenched her fists tightly.

"Lu laoshi? So what if he comes? Zhao Ya and the others have reached Fighter 2-dan, so they stand a good chance at victory...." Han Qiong chuckled. At this point, she suddenly saw Zhu Hong, Mo Xiao, and the others who followed closely behind Lu Xun and her mouth twitched. "Fighter 3-dan? All of his students.... have reached Fighter 3-dan?"

"At Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi realm.... One gains the ability to propel zhenqi and one's strength reaches 300kg.... How can Zhang Xuan and his students win?"

The duo froze in astonishment.

It is a qualitative difference between 2-dan and 3-dan. At 1-dan Juxi realm, one absorbs spiritual energy and propel it through his body, thus refining his body to that of a fighter, making it suitable for cultivation.

At 2-dan Dantian realm, one's body starts to accumulate spiritual energy at his dantian, expanding it.

At 3-dan Zhenqi realm, one will be able to drive their zhenqi in their body. In terms of physique, reaction speed, or strength, the two prior realms are too far below for comparison.

It can even be said that one reaches a whole new level as a lifeform upon reaching Zhenqi realm. If Lu Xun's students were just ordinary mortals before, they are currently comparable to tigers and wolves. How can the Zhang Xuan's students match up to them under such conditions?

Just a moment ago, upon realizing that Zhao Ya and the others have reached Fighter 2-dan, Shen Bi Ru and Han Qiong thought that it is likely that Zhang Xuan wins. But from the looks of it now.... It would be a miracle if he can even win a single match!

There not a single chance at victory!

"If he wants to win.... Only if a miracle happens!"

Shen Bi Ru smiled bitterly.

Previously carrying hope for Zhang laoshi's victory, she doesn't dare to harbor such thoughts now.

The two beauties were indescribably astounded. The other teachers who are spectating the fight became dumbfounded as well. In an instant, the entire surroundings turned silent. All of them glanced at Zhang Xuan with eyes of sympathy.

To be competing with Lu Xun laoshi.... He sure is looking for trouble!

"Fighter 2-dan against Fighter 3-dan? It would be hard for Apothecary Zhang to win!"

Just like the other teachers, Guild Leader Ouyang and Apothecary Du Man glanced at one another and shook their heads simultaneously.

"Indeed, the two are entirely different levels. There is no hope of victory!"

"Looks like Apothecary Zhang.... will lose!"

The other apothecaries also arrived at the same conclusion and they sighed in lamentation.

With just the appearance of Zhang Xuan and Lu Xun on the field, many people have already come to the verdict that the scale of victory is tilted toward Lu Xun.

....

"Today is the day of the Freshmen Tournament. But before that, we shall first hold a competition between the teachers, the Teacher Evaluation between Lu Xun laoshi and Zhang Xuan laoshi."

Seeing that the two stars of the show had arrived, the principal, who hadn't appeared in public for a very long time, stood at the dueling platform, and his voice resounded across the entire academy.

Hearing his words, Zhang Xuan and Lu Xun led their students onto the dueling platform, and the both of them sat by the side of the ring.

The Teacher Evaluation is a battle between students; teachers are not allowed to interfere in the battle at all and can only sit by the side.

Naturally, the duels between the students are only a part of the Teacher Evaluation. There are also written papers, potential assessments, and similar trials. However, as cultivators value strength greater than anything else, even if they were to triumph over their opponent in the latter examinations, it wouldn't be a glorious victory.

"Who wants to go first?"

Zhang Xuan paid no heed to the surrounding discussions. Rather, he looked at his five students calmly.

"Allow me!" Yuan Tao stood forward.

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Zhang Xuan is confident in the other party's abilities now that his Emperor Bloodline has been awakened.

"Kong Jie, go up. Defeat that worst student of the academy!"

Seeing the other party had sent the fellow who is ranked the last in the entrance examination out first, Lu Xun sneered coldly.

After a night of individual tutoring, his five students had already reinforced their Fighter 3-dan Zhenqi primary realm cultivation, and they had already gotten used to propelling the zhenqi in their body.

With their strength, defeating a couple of Fighter 2-dan isn't a problem at all.

"Later on, when you suffer a crushing defeat, I'll see how you are qualified to become the apprentice of the three master teachers!"

A cold gleam flashed across his eyes and Lu Xun sneered.

All of his hard work is for today. When his students defeat Zhang Xuan in public, that fellow will be humiliated, making it impossible for him to become the apprentice of the three master teachers.

By then, everyone will know that he, Lu Xun, is an invincible existence in Hongtian Academy.

....

"Senior Kong, please go easy on me...."

Staring at the opponent before him, Yuan Tao looked at him with a pitiful expression. "Look at how plump I am, my cultivation is only at Fighter 1-dan as well...."

"Go easy?" The edges of Kong Jie's lips curled up. His disdain for the latter was clear, "I never go easy on others in a battle! Either you admit defeat, or.... be kicked off the ring by me. Make your own choice!"

"Admit defeat? If I admit defeat, Zhang laoshi will beat me to death...." With a look of distress, Yuan Tao walked forward.

"If you do not wish to admit defeat, be prepared to be kicked off the ring then! It's that simple!"

Ignoring the other party's show of weakness, Kong Jie sneered coldly.

The battle hadn't begun, yet the fellow is already pleading for mercy. He is truly an eccentric person.

However, from this by itself, it can be seen that Zhang laoshi doesn't have any abilities. Lu laoshi's victory is certain.

"How about this? Since I can't defeat you anyway, allow me to put on an act and hit you a few times before I admit defeat. This way, Zhang laoshi won't be able to blame me for this. If you cooperate with me, I will pay you a thousand.... No, five hundred.... three hundred gold coins as compensation."

Walking until he was right before the opponent, Yuan Tao said with a suppressed voice.

"Three hundred gold coin? For putting on an act?" Kong Jie was taken aback. "Do you really have that much gold coin?"

"I do, look!"

Yuan Tao stretched his left hand into his pocket to retrieve something.

At the same time, Kong Jie couldn't help but lower his glance.

However, what waited for him wasn't gold coins. Instead, a fist came flying straight toward him.

"I fell for his trick...."

At this moment, he understood that this is the other party's ploy.

Yuan Tao had planned it out well. Feigning weakness and acting pitifully to convince the other party of his plight before going on to bribe the other party to divert his attention and last but not least, launching a sneak attack on him.... The heck, do you need to be so shameless?

So many students and esteemed figures are looking at them! Can you at least consider your own reputation....

He felt a stifled sensation in his chest, but it was already too late for him to react. Narrowing his eyes, he felt an incredible strength surging at him. Before he could do anything, an excruciating pain spread through his face.

Hu!

He was sent flying out of the dueling ring immediately.

Chapter 215

I've Lost

On the seats specially reserved for teachers.

Wang Chao was seated upright on one of the seats with a haughty expression on his face. His presence felt like a spear which would pierce into the heavens.

"Seems like Zhang Xuan is truly hopeless. Other people tend to send out their strongest member in the first match, so as to win the first battle and boost the morale of the team. Yet, he chose to send out this useless fellow at the very start. Is he admitting his defeat?"

Elder Hong Hao stroked his beard, excited by the sight before him.

After Zhang Xuan exposed the imitation ingredients used in his Hongtian Pavilion, his business had been poor. The shop wasn't far from closing down, and he had been wanting to skin this fellow alive.

If not for the fear that the academy would find out about the matter, leaving him unable to conduct his business at all, he would have long made a move on Zhang Xuan.

"A Fighter 1-dan advanced realm lad against a Fighter 3-dan opponent.... That's a completely one-sided battle!"

Wang Chao lifted his head up proudly and said, "Besides, Kong Jie has been practicing Iron Palm from young, granting him an outstanding offensive ability. On top of that, he belongs to the group of geniuses who utilise a style of frenzied offense. Once he begins, Yuan Tao probably won't even survive ten breaths before flying out of the ring!"

"A Juxi realm advanced stage has around 90kg of strength. On the other hand, a Zhenqi realm primary stage has around 300kg of strength. That is a difference of threefold. I will be amazed if he can survive three breaths against such an opponent!"

Elder Hong Hao chuckled.

"Indeed, if Kong Jie gets serious from the start, that fellow will be destroyed in an instant!" Wang Chao agreed. "Seems like the first match is Lu Xun's!"

"Of course! In fact, I think that Lu laoshi will win all five matches. This time, Zhang Xuan will be utterly humiliated."

Elder Hong Hao harrumphed coldly.

The other party destroyed his source of income. Ever since then, he had been wanting to crush him.

Thus, he specially looked for Lu Xun to initiate this matter. If not for his interference, it was unlikely that the Teacher Evaluation would occur.

He has many methods up his sleeves to cause Zhang Xuan's downfall. By all means, he wants to make him regret all he had done in Hongtian Pavilion.

"It's started!"

Not knowing that the other party was thinking about all these, Wang Chao nodded his head before exclaiming.

Wang Chao is extremely confident in Kong Jie.

The previous day, he helped Lu Xun to mentor these students, thus he is well aware of how scary those five are despite their young age.

A bunch of fellows who are at most Dantian realm wishes to triumph over them?

Isn't this dreaming?

Overjoyed at the opportunity to get back at Zhang Xuan, he turned to look at the dueling ring, only to see the two students facing each other.

"Senior Kong, please go easy on me...."

The next moment, Yuan Tao's plea echoed in the air. Upon hearing those words, the duo nearly spurted a mouthful of saliva and laughed heartily.

Yuan Tao's voice may not be loud, but they are both experts. With their sharp ears,

they could hear his words clearly.

"To be afraid of the opponent even before the match, what's the point of competing!"

"To instill fear in the enemy's troops before the fight, Lu laoshi's students sure are incredible...."

Elder Hong Hao's eyes glowed.

Did you see that? The highest realm of teaching a student is not for your student's fighting prowess to be impressive, but for his appearance to instill fear in the other students....

This is called a true expert!

This is the true might of a celebrity teacher!

You, a mere low-level teacher, will never match up to him!

"From the looks of it, that fellow should admit his defeat.... Ah?"

Hearing the conversation, Wang Chao nodded his head as well and commented. But halfway through his words, his voice ceased abruptly as though someone had grabbed onto his throat. For a moment, he seemed to be suffocating.

"What's wrong?"

Immersed in his delight, Elder Hong Hao hadn't paid much attention to the situation on the stage. At this moment, hearing the bizarre edge to the other party's tone, he immediately lifted his head to look at the dueling ring. With a single glance, he nearly spurted blood.

Yuan Tao, whom they thought was doomed, stood in the dueling ring, patting the dust off his clothes, looking incredibly valiant on the stage. On the other hand, the powerful Kong Jie lied beneath the dueling ring. His eyes had turned white and it was clear that he had fainted.

"What.... is going on?"

Being outside the dueling ring means instant disqualification. What had happened?

Why, in the blink of an eye, that new Zhenqi realm genius who was about to display his full might would be suddenly lying on the ground with his eyes rolled back?

The competition did end in less than three breaths, as they have thought, but.... why did it end like this?

Elder Hong Hao felt as though he was going mad.

"That fool...."

Stunned, Wang Chao roared. If he could, he would have slapped Kong Jie to death that instant.

Given your superior offensive strength and cultivation, why did you chat with him.... If you had just attacked him from the start, it wouldn't end up like this. Look at what has happened. Before you could even display your Iron Palm, you were already sent flying, pummeled to the point that even your parents won't be able to recognize you....

"You.... Sneak attack! Desplicable!" Zhu Hong roared.

Does anyone spar like that?

Just an instant ago, you were talking about how you were going to admit defeat, but in the next, you sent a fist flying straight at the other party's face. Aren't you being too shameless? Where is your sportsmanship?

However, watching this sight made Zhu Hong recall the incident when he delivered the war letter to Zhang Xuan laoshi's classroom, causing his mouth to twitch uncontrollably.

It seems that.... of the students under Zhang laoshi.... there isn't a single one who knows what sportsmanship is....

"Sneak attack? The duel has already begun. Anyone can make a move, so why would you call it sneak attack? I wouldn't mind even if he were to attack me!"

Ignoring the other party's chatter, Yuan Tao flung his sleeves, and with the disposition of an expert, he stared down at Kong Jie in disdain, "He should blame himself for being weak. To be unable to even sustain a single hit of mine, how brittle can he be?"

"Weak?"

"No matter how strong one is, it is impossible for anyone to stand against such a sneak attack...."

"To speak of sneak attacks so righteously, how can you be so shameless?"

....

Hearing his brazen words, the spectators' mouths twitched.

If other people were to win by sneak attack, they would be guilt-ridden. Yet, this fellow spoke of it so brazenly, as though it was the natural thing to do....

The heck!

Where's your dignity?

"Teacher, does this mean that it's my victory?"

With his hands behind his back, Yuan Tao turned to look at the refereeing teacher.

"That.... It's your victory!"

The teacher turned to glance at Kong Jie and judging from his state, it was unlikely that he could regain consciousness soon. Thus, he could only nod his head to Yuan Tao's words.

After refereeing the Freshmen Tournament for numerous years, this was the first time he met with such a matter.

If one were to accuse Yuan Tao of sneak attack, the duel had already begun. In a sense, it is Kong Jie's fault for being distracted, so he can't blame another person for his loss.

Yet, it is clearly not an ordinary battle....

"Hmph!"

Seeing his first student being struck out of the dueling ring the moment he got up, giving away the victory that should have been his, Lu Xun nearly choked on his anger.

He had spent an entire three million to purchase pills. Then, he spent an entire night, expending his zhenqi to help them achieve a breakthrough to Zhenqi realm....

But what did he receive?

At the very least, you should have at least lasted for awhile against the other party. If you can't match up to him, I would have just accepted it. Yet, without even making the slightest move, you were sent flying out of the ring....

Lu Xun grabbed at his chest and he felt his vision going gray.

If not for his self-control, his body would have been convulsing now.

"Lu laoshi, we've lost the first round. What should we do next?"

Zhu Hong asked worriedly.

"Mo Xiao, you're up next."

Ignoring the constricted sensation in his heart, Lu Xun said.

"Yes!" Mo Xiao nodded his head. Wielding his spear, he walked forward.

"Zheng Yang, you're up!"

After seeing who the other party sent out, Zhang Xuan said.

Zheng Yang nodded his head. Wielding a spear in his hands as well, he walked into the ring.

The two friends were to face one another in the ring once more.

Glancing at the returning Yuan Tao, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in approval.

It wasn't that he was approving Yuan Tao's sneak attack, just that Yuan Tao was a Juxi realm advanced stage whereas his opponent was a Zhenqi realm cultivator. The difference between them exceeded more than a single realm.

No matter how powerful Yuan Tao's defensive and offensive abilities are, if he can't land a blow on the other party, it would just be talk.

Yuan Tao knew that his speed was his weakness, thus he put on an act before attacking his enemy.... Honestly speaking, Kong Jie couldn't blame his carelessness on anyone else.

....

"It's Mo Xiao! It will surely be a victory this round!"

Suppressing the disappointment from the first match downward, Wang Chao's eyes lit up upon seeing Mo Xiao stepping onto the stage.

"He is...."

Upon seeing the other party's confident declaration, Elder Hong Hao turned to look at Wang Chao with a peculiar expression.

"Mo Xiao specializes in spear art and he was once my student!" Wang Chao nodded his head. "On top of being a Zhenqi realm cultivator, his comprehension of spearmanship is impressive. More importantly, I have imparted the Wang Clan's spearmanship 3rd form, 7th form, and 18th form to him!"

"Onset of the Cold Gleam, Remnants of the Setting Sun, and The Returning Forest Canary?" Disbelief flashed through Elder Hong Hao's eyes. "Even though these three moves aren't the strongest moves in Wang Clan's spearmanship, they are nevertheless profound techniques and possess boundless might. You imparted such valuable spear techniques to him?"

The Wang Clan's spearmanship is known as the greatest secret spear art in Tianxuan Kingdom, and there isn't a single spear user who doesn't wish to learn it. However, Wang Chong and Wang Chao never imparted these moves to any outsider.

This is precisely the reason why the set of spear technique is becoming more and more valuable. Countless people are willing to do anything to lay their hands on it.

Usually, learning a single move can mean that one will be invincible among peers of the same cultivation level. Yet, Mo Xiao had learned three moves at a single go, and furthermore, they are the more advanced moves!

"Indeed! That's the reason why Mo Xiao will definitely win!"

Not only did confidence reappear on Wang Chao's face, it even deepened as he spoke of Mo Xiao. It seemed as though the slight hiccup before doesn't affect the situation at all.

However, it isn't a surprise either.

Kong Jie isn't his student. While Wang Chao knew that he isn't weak, he isn't too clear of his personality whatsoever.

But Mo Xiao is different.

Having been under him, Wang Chao knows that Mo Xiao is resilient and headstrong. It is almost impossible for Zheng Yang to win through a sneak attack.

More importantly, the latter had received this personal guidance and his spearmanship has reached great heights. It would be difficult for him to lose even if he wants to!

Wang Chao had also seen Zheng Yang's abilities when he visited him on the first day of school alongside Mo Xiao. His spear was feeble and it didn't hold the sharp disposition that a spear user should have. Thus, he rejected him from his tutelage.

In just half a month, it is impossible for a person like this to grow much stronger. As such, it is impossible for Zheng Yang to match up to Mo Xiao.

A month with the stave, a year with the saber, and a lifetime with the spear.

If one could improve their spearmanship so swiftly, the Wang Clan wouldn't be proclaimed as the number one spear clan in Tianxuan Kingdom.

Clearly, Lu Xun was aware of the fact as well, that's why he sent Mo Xiao up. He hoped for him to achieve a perfect victory and reverse the situation.

"Mo Xiao, we've met again!"

On the dueling platform, Zheng Yang placed his spear taut on the ground, with its tip facing the sky.

"Indeed, we've met again!"

Mo Xiao nodded his head, lifting his spear up as well.

From young, the two of them had been good buddies. It was hard to imagine that they would meet on a dueling platform under such a situation.

"Let's start!"

Knowing that it would be difficult for his friend to make the first move, Zheng Yang said.

"Hold it for a moment, allow me to warm up first!"

Mo Xiao shook his head. Retreating a few steps backward, the zhenqi in his body flurried and he executed the three moves which he had learned from Wang Chao smoothly.

Wuwuwuwu!

The spear emitted shock waves in all directions, causing the spectators' hair to fly about.

"What is that fellow doing? If he displays the three spear art now, isn't he telling the other party that he knows the Wang Clan's spearmanship? How will he fight if the other party is guarded against those three moves of his?"

Seeing how Mo Xiao didn't dive straight into the battle and instead, display his spear art to 'warm up', Elder Hong Hao was perplexed.

If one shows his trump cards before the battle, won't the other party be guarded against it?

"Hehe, rest easy!" Wang Chong chuckled. With a confident and proud look, he said, "It is impossible for the Wang Clan's spearmanship to be countered. These moves have long been out spreading all these years. Many people had attempted to imitate them, but no one succeeded in deciphering and countering them. Mo Xiao's actions are right, he is intentionally allowing the other party to see it so as to exert pressure on him. Afterward, he will bring the fame of the Wang Clan's spearmanship to greater heights!"

"That's.... Perhaps so!" Elder Hong Hao nodded his head.

The Wang Clan spearmanship movements have been spread for many years, but without learning the underlying zhenqi circulation method, it is impossible to execute the move no matter how lifelike one's imitation is. More importantly.... There isn't a counter for it.

If it could be countered, Wang Chong wouldn't be that famous.

On the dueling ring, Mo Xiao executed the three Wang Clan's spearmanship moves perfectly and thus, concluded his warm up.

"Alright, he is probably going to show the prowess of the Wang Clan's spearmanship now!"

Wang Chao chuckled once more. He was about to compliment Mo Xiao further and watch Zheng Yang being beaten to a pulp when, dang lang, he saw Mo Xiao drop the spear in his hands onto the ground suddenly as he sighed.

"Even though I have reached Zhenqi realm, I am unable to match that spear of yours. I admit defeat!"

"What?"

Wang Chao's body shook.

The fight hasn't even started! Why are you admitting defeat!

Even if one has to admit defeat, it should be the opponent!

The heck, what's going on?

Lu Xun, who stood on the opposite, staggered as well. He was on the verge of tears.

Chapter 216

Exerting Too Much Force

For Lu Xun to have risen up through the ranks, his talents and skills weren't the only determining factors. More importantly was his attitude. Regardless of the challenges that he faces, he deals with them in a calm manner, not allowing pride to get in his way. Even though Zhang Xuan's reputation is terrible, Lu Xun didn't underestimate him at all and made preparations in advance.

Before deciding on the students to send for the duel, he investigated Zhang Xuan's students in order to pick out the best combination to deal with and counter them.

Based on his investigation, Zheng Yang grew up with Mo Xiao and they practiced the spear together. However, the Mo Xiao's talents are obviously superior to Zheng Yang, and of the countless battle between the two, it had always been Mo Xiao's victory.

This was precisely the reason why he poached Mo Xiao from his best friend, even having his friend impart him the Wang Clan's spearmanship.

He thought that this way, this battle would surely be his for the taking, but.... before the battle even started, Mo Xiao had already thrown aside his spear and admitted defeat....

Lu Xun felt his entire body tremble and he was about to go crazy.

Kong Jie fell for the other party's deception and got knocked out in a single punch. Alright, I'll tolerate it.

At most, just six hundred thousand of my gold coins (three million divided over five students) went to waste. But you.... what is going on with you?

I've seen many darned people, but I've never seen such a darned person!

You clearly know the reason why I stayed up so late, just to help raise your strength, is to achieve victory in the Teacher Evaluation. Furthermore, I had spent so much money on you, yet you admitted defeat even before the fight....

"What's going on?"

"Two Zhenqi realm students, the first one was sent flying by a single punch while the second one admitted defeat without a fight? What is going on?"

Wang Chao and Lu Xun weren't the only ones who were in bewilderment over the happenings, the spectating students and teachers were baffled as well.

When they saw Lu laoshi bring a group of Zhenqi realm students over, all of them thought that it would be a one-sided match. Yet.... The matches became truly one-sided but sided toward the other party....

Actually, the crowd wasn't the only confused ones. Even the person in question, Zhang Xuan, was unable to comprehend what was happening as well.

When Mo Xiao and Zheng Yang crossed blows with one another in the classroom, Zhang Xuan was at Master Lu Chen's home, so he wasn't aware of it. Thus, he couldn't understand why Mo Xiao would admit defeat before the fight even started.

"The reason why I admitted defeat is that, a few days ago, the both of us participated in a private duel. With just a single move, Zheng Yang was able to defeat me! In fact, it wouldn't have been difficult for him to claim my life then."

Before Zhao Ya and the others could tell Zhang Xuan about the situation, Mo Xiao's voice suddenly rang from the stage. His voice was calm, and the slightest dismay or regret couldn't be heard. Rather, it sounded carefree.

"I had been pondering over the last few days on how I should counter his move. Initially, I thought that with a breakthrough to Zhenqi realm, I might be able to neutralize the technique. Thus, I tried it just now but realized that I still am not a match for him. The move which Zheng Yang had learned from Zhang laoshi points straight toward the essence of the spear, and I'm afraid that even if I were to study it for my entire life, I still wouldn't be able to understand it, needless to say, withstand it."

"Since I know that I will be defeated with a single move, I might as well admit my defeat right away!"

At this, Mo Xiao clasped his fists and chuckled softly, "Zheng Yang, you have a good teacher. You have to treasure him dearly!"

At which, Mo Xiao picked up his spear, turned around, and returned back to his seat.

His voice echoed throughout the field and almost everyone heard his words clearly.

"Mo Xiao said that he wouldn't be able to decipher and counter the move which Zhang laoshi imparted Zheng Yang even if he were to devote his entire life to it?"

"That's to say, his move is superior to even that of the Wang Clan's spearmanship? How is that possible?"

"Since this is a duel, it is unlikely for him to lie.... Otherwise, won't Lu laoshi beat him to death?"

....

Everyone's eyes widened in shock.

The Wang Clan's spearmanship is simply too famous in Tianxuan Kingdom. Many people are able to recognize it simply by looking at the moves. It is an indomitable existence in its field, representing the pinnacle of spear arts.

Yet, Mo Xiao said that he isn't a match for the other party.... Everyone was astounded.

"Looks like Zhang Xuan laoshi isn't as weak as the rumors put him out to be. On the contrary, it seems that he is a person of great means!"

"Indeed, out of a total of five matches, he has won two of them consecutively. Will Lu laoshi really lose here?"

"Who knows. But I hope that Lu laoshi will be able to make a comeback...."

....

Voices in heated discussions filled the surroundings. Lu Xun, who was on stage, was breathing heavily and his face was turning green.

The heck, what is wrong with these students whom I have taught? No student should ever do their teacher in like that.

Furthermore, what do you mean with your words?

Zheng Yang has a good teacher.... Do you not have a good teacher as well?

I spent three million to buy pills for you, students, exerting my zhenqi to help raise your cultivations. Yet.... This is all I get?

Even though Lu Xun was infuriated, he knew that it wasn't the time to lash out. The moment he loses his temper, the prestige which he had built up over the years would immediately crumble.

He scanned the students before him.

There were still three of his students who had yet to fight yet.

Bai Chao, Du Lei, and Zhu Hong.

Bai Chao specializes in fist techniques, making him a tough opponent for Liu Yang, who had damaged his meridians in his right arm.

Du Lei's possesses impressive leg techniques. On top of that, Lu Xun had also imparted a formidable movement technique to him, granting him nimble movements, so it shouldn't be a problem for him to deal with Wang Ying, whose legs are injured.

As for Zhu Hong, he will be facing Zhao Ya.

After losing two rounds consecutively, Lu Xun has to win the next one. Otherwise, his reputation will be tarnished completely.

"Du Lei, you go up next!"

After contemplating for a moment, he decided to dispatch Du Lei.

Based on his investigations, Wang Ying has a weak and gentle character. As long as Du Lei assaults her swiftly the moment the match starts, the latter will definitely be intimidated.

Besides, the other party's legs had just recovered and they are still weak. Even if Du Lei were to be unable to win against her, he should be able to stand his own ground and rely on his movement technique to avert danger. At the very least, he will not suffer crushing defeats like the two before.

Du Lei nodded his head and walked up to the dueling ring.

"Wang Ying!"

Seeing the other party had sent Du Lei, Zhang Xuan gestured for his own student to face her opponent.

Wang Ying answered. With a slightly flushed face, she walked to the ring as well.

By the spectator stand.

"As expected of Lu laoshi. Even though he has lost two rounds consecutively, he has seen through Zhang Xuan's weakness."

Shen Bi Ru's eyebrows were deeply knitted together in worry.

"Weakness? What weakness?" Han Qiong was perplexed.

"Wang Ying is the sole daughter of the Clan Head Wang Hong of the Four Great Clans. She has a weak and innocent nature, and as such, trusts others too easily. Of Zhang Xuan laoshi's five students, she is the weakest link."

Shen Bi Ru said.

"If that's really the case, then she is indeed Zhang Xuan's weakness."

Han Qiong nodded her head in agreement.

To cultivate is to go against the heavens. Those who possess weak characters tend to be at a disadvantage when fighting with others.

"Not just so, Wang Ying was also injured when she was younger, leaving a disability in her legs. Even though she has no problem walking around, this flaw will show through the moment she fights. For this matter, Clan Head Wang Hong had invited numerous famous physician in the kingdom to treat her. Even Master Yuanyu had taken a look at her condition, but he was also at a loss on how to help her, having to return bitterly."

Shen Bi Ru knew quite a bit of Wang Ying's matter, and she recounted them to Han Qiong. "That's to say.... With Wang Ying's legs, it is impossible for her to match up to Du Lei."

"Ah?"

Han Qiong was astonished. She hadn't expected it to be such a situation.

"As for this Du Lei, he was once Chen Hong laoshi's student."

"Chen Hong laoshi? The teacher who specializes in movement technique?"

"Un, him! Of all of his students, Du Lei possesses the greatest speed. Using such a person to deal with Wang Ying, it is clear that Lu laoshi had done his homework." Shen Bi Ru shook his head. "Seems like Wang Ying.... will lose!"

....

"Plea.... Please do guide me!"

On the stage, Wang Ying clasped her hands with a slightly reddened face.

"I don't dare to claim to be able to guide you. If you wish to fight, let's start now!"

Knowing that he shoulders a heavy responsibility, Du Lei's feet pushed against the ground, and lowering his body, he charged straight toward Wang Ying.

His movements were quick, as though a whizzing arrow.

"Fast!"

"Is he really a Fighter 3-dan cultivator? Even a Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm cultivator wouldn't possess a speed of his level!"

"This move is called 【Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps】 , it is a famous technique belonging to Lu laoshi. To think that Lu laoshi would generously impart this move to his student!"

"Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps? The greatest secret manual on movement techniques in Hongtian Academy? Isn't it considered one of the top techniques in Tianxuan Kingdom?"

"That's right!"

"If I could learn this move, I would definitely be able to reign supreme among those of the same cultivation level. This Wang Ying is probably in for a tough fight!"

....

Many students had recognized Du Lei's technique and they were astounded.

The Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps is a formidable technique, even when compared to the other profound movement techniques. Lu laoshi had once relied on this movement technique to defeat numerous experts. No one had imagined that he would impart it to Du Lei.

Even though Du Lei had only learned the fundamentals, this in itself is sufficient for him to defeat cultivators of the same realm.

Not to mention, Wang Ying's legs are injured and her cultivation is only at Dantian realm.

Facing Du Lei's swift charge, Wang Ying gritted her silver teeth, twisted, and dodged his assault.

"Hehe, you might be able to evade my first attack, but how much more can you evade?"

Realizing that she had managed to dodge his rapid charge successfully, Du Lei felt perplexed. However, he paid no further heed and sneered coldly. Driving the zhenqi in his body furiously, his speed grew faster and faster, and soon, blurred shadows started to appear around the ring.

At the highest level, the Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps allows one to create nine shadow clones. It is difficult for one to differentiate between the shadow clones and the true person, making it nigh impossible to evade its attacks.

Even though Du Lei was still far from producing nine shadow clones, now operating at his full strength, the afterimages he produced nevertheless made it difficult to discern his true position.

"Way too strong!"

"Such amazing speed, I can't even see him! How can one fight against something like that?"

The mouths of the students twitched. Imagining themselves in Wang Ying's shoes, they could not help but shake their heads.

Based on their level of strength, they weren't even able to see him. If so, how could they fight him?

"Seems like it's Du Lei's victory!"

Wang Chao laughed heartily.

After having his face slapped for two consecutive times, he had already been traumatized within. But observing at Du Lei, he hadn't gotten deceived like Kong Jie, getting knocked out in an instant, and neither did he admit his defeat the moment he walks onto the stage. This made him feel reassured.

It would be embarrassing if a Zhenqi realm cultivator loses against a Dantian realm little girl whose legs are injured.

"Indeed, given his incredible speed, even I myself would find it hard to defeat him if I were to lower my cultivation realm to fight with him, needless to say, that young lass."

Elder Hong Hao stroked his beard and smiled, "Look, that Wang Ying is going to make a move...."

Wang Chao glanced over and saw Wang Ying lift her right leg. Hesitation was obvious on her face, and she seemed to be uncertain on how she should attack.

"Haha, to deal with such a movement technique, one should rely on their hands instead. After all, one's hands are much more nimble than one's legs! Her legs are injured, and yet she still insists on using them. Such a fool, it would be a miracle if she can successfully land a kick on him...."

Sneering coldly, Wang Chao was in the midst of mocking Wang Ying when he saw the girl send a kicking toward a shadow before her.

Peng!

Before the ridiculing smile could fully form on his face, Wang Chao saw the afterimages come to an abrupt halt. Du Lei's face reddened and he was sent flying a dozen meters, landing heavily onto the ground. He coughed mouthful after mouthful

of blood.

"Du Lei.... I'm sorry. I tried my best to control my strength, but I still ended up exerting too much force by mistake...."

Wang Ying panicked and she hurriedly apologized. Her face was flushed red and it seemed that she was on the verge of tears.

Chapter 217

It's a Draw

Silence.

The entire place turned silent.

Everyone's mouth was widened in astonishment, all of them dumbfounded.

Shen Bi Ru, who just claimed that Wang Ying would lose, felt as though she had been slapped hard in her face. Her deep, black eyes were about to pop out from their sockets.

"A single kick.... and she sent Du Lei flying? How.... How did she know which were shadow clones, and which was the real one?"

Given Du Lei's speed, even expert cultivators of the same realm would find it hard to discern the real person. Yet, a casual kick from Wang Ying sent him flying a distance, as though she was simply kicking a mere human bound in a sack.

"Not only does she have to differentiate between the shadow clones and the true person, the speed of her kick must be that much faster than Du Lei. Otherwise, it would be impossible for her to injure him if her attacks are unable to keep up with him."

Han Qiong's face turned grim. "It appears that not only has Wang Ying's injury recovered, she had also learned an incredible leg technique and movement technique."

"Indeed!"

Shen Bi Ru also recovered from her shock.

This wasn't just a matter of seeing through the enemy's movement technique. Without suitable battle techniques in complement, how could she have sent him flying that easily?

"This...." Wang Chao grabbed his hair.

He had just insulted the other party as a fool, and the next moment, she sent Du Lei flying with a kick. Wang Chao felt as though he had been toyed with.

Just beside him, Elder Hong Hao looked as though he had been given a tight slap as well and he was on the verge of tears.

Initially, he was here to see Zhang Xuan get humiliated in public. Yet, somehow, he ended up watching how Zhang Xuan's reputation grew increasingly brilliant and Lu Xun getting beaten so terribly instead.

"Cough cough cough!"

On the side of the dueling ring, Lu Xun choked on his saliva and nearly fell to the ground.

Elder Hong Hao was on the verge of tears, but Lu Xun was already crying.

What exactly is going on?

That is the Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps, and there was no mistake in Du Lei's execution at all. Even though Du Lei is still a way off from reaching his level of mastery, to be able to display this kind of mastery at Zhenqi realm, he can already be considered as a genius!

Such amazing execution of a formidable movement technique, and yet Du Lei was sent flying with a single kick?

More importantly....

The girl on the stage had reddened eyes, and she kept apologizing, saying that she had accidentally used too much force....

Too much force your head!

So the reason why you were hesitating wasn't that you were at a loss, but you were considering how to avoid wounding the other party heavily?

If holding back your strength sent the other party flying a dozen meters, wouldn't he be killed if you had used your full strength?

The spectators all went hysterical. On the stage, Du Lei finally struggled to his feet. Looking at the apologetic girl before him, he couldn't take the mental blow and spurted another mouthful of blood.

"Are you alright.... I really didn't do it intentionally.... I just learned the battle technique, so I can't control my strength well and used too much force...."

Wang Ying's eyes turned red.

"Used too much strength your head!"

Roaring, Du Lei charged toward Wang Ying.

He was truly enraged.

It is one thing if you had sent me flying with a single kick, but apologizing? Are you trying to humiliate me?

Furthermore, she kept emphasizing that she had used too much force.... Do you think that I am too fragile, not worthy of facing you at your full strength?

"Ah?"

Wang Ying didn't expect that her sincere apology would result in the other party charging toward her. She was frightened pale.

Even though her cultivation is higher than Zheng Yang and Liu Yang, she doesn't have much battle experience. Not to mention, she has an excessively kind nature. Seeing the other party charge toward her, she naturally became terrified.

In a moment of panic, she retreated thoughtlessly.

Hu!

Magically, within the blink of an eye, she was already a dozen meters away.

"What?"

"Traveling a dozen meters in the blink of an eye? Wha.... What is that movement technique?"

"Too fast! How can this be possible?"

....

Upon witnessing the maneuver, the crowd turned silent abruptly for a brief moment before bursting into an uproar.

Everyone had considered the Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Step to be already one of the most formidable movement technique. Yet, to think that Wang Ying's technique would be even more fearsome.

To travel more than a dozen meters in less than half a breath, the entire event felt like a supernatural occurrence.

Even Pixue realm experts are incapable of such speed.

How did she do it?

"It is impossible for the Wang Clan to possess such a movement technique. If they had it, they would have long become famous...."

"Indeed. But if it isn't the Wang Clan, from whom did she learn the technique?"

"It must be Zhang laoshi. Didn't Zheng Yang's formidable spear art come from Zhang laoshi as well?"

"To impart such an incredible movement technique so readily? If that's true, I want to withdraw from my tutelage and come under Zhang laoshi!"

"Count me in as well...."

....

The eyes of the spectators burned with passion.

Spear art is a specialized art, and not everyone is interested in it. However, movement techniques are different. This can serve as a mean of survival, as well as a trump card. If one can master it, even when facing an expert far superior to them, he will at least have the ability to flee unharmed.

Who wouldn't want to learn such a powerful and handy battle technique?

"I will defeat you...."

Seeing Wang Ying travel a dozen meters in the blink of an eye, Du Lei felt faint. However, rage had already overtaken his rationality and without any care, he charged forward once more.

"AH!"

Seeing the other party's savage expression, as well as the crimson blood flowing down the ends of his lips, Wang Ying felt terrified. Her legs pushed against the ground and she fled once more.

Just like that, one chased while one fled.

"Seems that her character is simply too weak. I will have polish up her personality in the future."

Taking in the sight before him, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

If met with this situation, putting Zheng Yang, Liu Yang, and Yuan Tao aside, even Zhao Ya would have immediately sent Du Lei flying. Even if he didn't die, he would find to stand up once more.

But Wang Ying, on the other hand, fled from him.

It was due to her weak personality which led to such a situation.

It seems that her greatest flaw isn't her cultivation or her battle technique, but her battle experience.

"Heaven's Path Movement Art saps one's stamina greatly. It might be okay to execute it once or twice, but any more than that would be difficult!"

Heaven's Path Movement Art allows one to move at amazing speeds and travel a dozen meters in the blink of an eye. Even so, it has its own flaws.

That is, it exerts greatly on one's stamina.

Wang Ying might be able to escape like this once or twice, but she will eventually be caught by the enemy if this goes on.

And as Zhang Xuan expected, Wang Ying started sweating profusely and panting heavily, unable to move anymore.

At this moment, she had also been forced to the corner of the ring by the other party.

Huala!

Du Lei ran forward and grabbed her arm, "Even if I can't win, I won't allow you to win...."

Roaring, he leaped forward, pulling her along with him.

"You...."

Not expecting that the other party would resort to such tricks, forcefully pulling her out of the ring, Wang Ying panicked and sent another kick toward him.

Hu!

As though a rubber ball, Du Lei was immediately sent flying. In the midair, he was unable to keep his balance and flipped several turns before landing at a distance thirty meters away.

Putong!

However, right after kicking the other party, Wang Ying, having drained the final bit of stamina she had left, fell from the dueling ring as well.

Both parties had fallen from the dueling ring and landed on the ground at nearly the same moment. As such, the conclusion was.... a draw!

Du Lei knew that he would be unable to defeat Wang Ying in a straightforward battle. As such, he charged forward ferociously, pulling her down with him.

However, Wang Ying's counterattack was also fearsome. Having sent the other party flying thirty meters away, even if Du Lei doesn't die, he would be confined to his bed for at least two months.

"This.... This is cheating!"

"Too shameless...."

"He obviously isn't a match for her, yet he tried to pull the other party down to the ground. He deserves that kick...."

"How can one be so shameless? He's even worse than Yuan Tao!"

A commotion broke out beneath the stage.

Everyone could tell that Du Lei's action was no different from shameless cheating.

While the teachers' reputations are at stake, the Teacher Evaluation is actually just a friendly spar between students. It was clear that his movement technique and leg technique were inferior to the other party, yet he forcefully used his superior strength, as a male, to drag the other party down with him. In their eyes, it was an exceedingly shameless action.

Thus, everyone thought that he deserved to be sent flying.... There wasn't a single person who felt sympathy for him.

Hearing those curses, Yuan Tao became speechless. He hadn't said anything, so why did he suddenly get targeted as well?

Who are you saying is shameless? You're the one who is shameless, your entire family is shameless....

"Both landed on the ground at the same time, draw!"

Hearing the arguments, the refereeing teacher began to feel a headache. Even so, he nodded his head and announced his verdict.

Even though Du Lei's actions lacked sportsmanship, it was true that the both parties had landed at the same time, so the match could only be considered as a draw.

"Teacher...."

Upon hearing the conclusion, Wang Ying turned to look at Zhang Xuan with an apologetic look.

Zhang laoshi had given her so much, treating her legs and imparting her a leg technique and movement technique. Yet.... She wasn't able to defeat her opponent and bring honor to Zhang laoshi. She felt as though she had disappointed him.

"Don't worry, just take note of this in the future. Don't let it bother you." Zhang Xuan nodded his head. "It is negligence on my part as well. What you're lacking isn't your cultivation or your battle techniques, it is your character."

"Thank you, teacher!"

Seeing that Zhang laoshi didn't blame her, and on the contrary, he even consoled her, Wang Ying felt even more embarrassed. However, the result couldn't be changed, so she could only walk gloomily over to the other students.

If Du Lei saw her expression, he would have gone insane immediately.

Your kick caused me to be groaning in pain here, unable to move at all, yet you are feeling depressed.... The one who should be depressed is me!

"Zhang laoshi won two consecutive rounds and achieved a draw for one. It is already impossible for him to lose the Teacher Evaluation anymore."

"Indeed. Even if Lu laoshi wins the next two rounds, it would only result in a draw."

"Let's see how things unfold. I don't think that Lu laoshi's students stand a good chance against the other remaining students of Zhang laoshi."

"I think so too. Initially, I thought that Zhang laoshi would suffer a crushing defeat. Yet, to think that.... Lu laoshi would be the one under pressure. What is going on?"

....

Even though they felt that Du Lei's actions were too shameless, they quickly accepted and got over that fact.

This was how the rules were. Even though it seemed unfair, there was nothing they could do about it.

But here comes the problem.

Of the five duels, Zhang laoshi had achieved two wins and one draw, so all of the pressure is now on Lu laoshi. If Lu laoshi were to lose the next match, there would be no need for the fifth one.

On the other hand, if Lu laoshi were to win the remaining two, it would be a draw for the Teacher Evaluation. This would be the best possible conclusion, given how both sides would retain their dignity.

Upon thinking so, the crowd focused their gazes on Lu Xun immediately, interested to see who he would send out next.

"I can't lose anymore.... I started this Teacher Evaluation to display my skills, and if I were to lose another round, I will be too embarrassed to meet anyone in the future...."

Lu Xun gritted his teeth.

Since the crowd was able to comprehend the current situation, it was natural that Lu Xun would understand it as well.

If he were to lose, not only would he lose the reputation that he had painstakingly built up, he might even become a laughingstock.

"Zhu Hong had once lost to Zhao Ya. Even though his cultivation has improved, he might still hold a trauma over that event. If I were to send him out, I can't guarantee his victory.... I should have Bai Chao go up! He specializes in fist techniques and it shouldn't be a problem for him to deal with Liu Yang."

Making up his mind, Lu Xun beckoned.

Bai Chao stood out from the crowd and took big steps to the dueling ring.

"It's my turn!"

Upon seeing Bai Chao walk up to the stage, Liu Yang chuckled softly. Before Zhang Xun could say anything, he had already stepped into the ring to face his opponent.

Chapter 218

Exchanging Fists

At the VIP seats, Wang Chao and Elder Hong Hao gazed at each other.

"Bai Chao specializes in fist technique. Liu Yang.... shouldn't be an opponent for him!"

Wang Chao hesitated. Even though he said such words, he clearly wasn't confident.

In the previous few matches, he had declared haughtily that Lu Xun's students would win, but in the end.... all of them lost tragically.

This Bai Chao, based on Wang Chao's understanding, should be able to win easily, but.... Zhang Xuan's students were simply unfathomable. All of his previous predictions had fallen through, and he had lost all his confidence.

"I think so too. He should.... be able to win...."

Elder Hong Hao was dispirited as well.

He wanted to witness this Zhang laoshi being humiliated in public and lose all of his dignity. Yet, from the looks of it, it is impossible to humiliate him anymore. At this moment, all he can do is to try his best to preserve his own dignity....

"Bai Chao, don't hesitate at all. Once the match starts, use your strongest fist technique. Don't give the other party any gaps to exploit!"

Gritting his teeth, Wang Chao shouted to Bai Chao.

There is no room to retreat now. If this match were to end in a loss, there wouldn't be a final match. Thus, all they can do now is to entrust all of their hopes and expectations to Bai Chao and hope that he will not let them down.

Bai Chao specializes in fist techniques, and it would be best for him to execute his strongest technique from the start and defeat his opponent swiftly.

Otherwise, while he enters with huge expectations, he will leave with utmost disappointment and....

His good buddy will lose all chance to impress the three master teachers and become one of their disciples.

"Un!"

Bai Chao nodded his head and stared at Liu Yang with narrowed eyes.

He had seen the happenings of the previous duels clearly. He understood that even though Zhang laoshi's students didn't possess high cultivation, none of them was weak.

He mustn't show the slightest hesitation.

Otherwise, history would just repeat itself.

....

"Clan Head Wang Hong, do you think that Bai Chao can win?"

On the spectator stand, Clan Head Bai Ming glanced at Wang Hong.

As the heads of powerful clans and as Tongxuan realm experts, their words were authoritative.

"I don't think so. Zhang laoshi has already achieved two wins and one draw, and this should affect the Bai Chao's morale greatly. As long as Liu Yang doesn't fare badly, it is unlikely for him to win."

Wang Hong shook his head.

The Teacher Evaluation was already more than halfway through and all along, Lu laoshi's students had been suffering from crushing defeats. It wouldn't be easy for him to rebound and achieve victory.

Besides, his very own daughter was under Zhang laoshi's tutelage and thus, he understood how fearsome the theories Zhang Xuan taught were. Otherwise, how could that airheaded daughter of his have easily sent the Fighter 3-dan Du Lei flying

with a kick?

If even her could become so formidable, it would be impossible for Liu Yang to be weak.

"My view differs from yours!" Bai Ming said with a sharp glint in his eyes.

"Oh?" Wang Hong looked over curiously.

"This Bai Chao is a member of my Bai Clan. However, he is from a distant branch family, so I had never really heard of him. I've had a few of my clan members look into him just a moment ago, and it turns out that he practices the Steel Armor Art!"

Even though he was the one speaking, a tinge of disbelief could still be heard in Clan Head Bai Ming's voice.

"Steel Armor Art? Could it be...."

For a moment, Clan Head Wang Hong was puzzled. Then, his eyes suddenly narrowed, "Could it be that cultivation technique which the Steel Armor Elder practices? Isn't it a lost art? Why does your clan member know of it?"

Very few people knew of the Steel Armor Art, but the Steel Armor Elder was a famous figure, such that even many of the younger generation had heard of him.

He was a famous bandit from seventy years ago.

From pillaging to slaughter, there was no evil which he hadn't commit. Furthermore, he was one of the top-ranking experts in Tianxuan Kingdom throughout all of its history, and even today, his name still strikes fear in hearts.

Due to his arrogant ways, both the royal palace and the commoners had tried repeatedly to bring him down. However, all of these attempts ended in failure. It could be said that those who had gone after him never returned back.

Finally, there was an occasion when his whereabouts were discovered and a dozen experts trapped him in a valley. Knowing of his incredible prowess, none of them approached him. Rather, they made use of bows to attack him from afar. Yet, they realized with a shock that there was a layer reminiscent of animal scales on his skin surface, causing all of the arrows they shot to simply bounce off him.

That is to say, the arrows were unable to deal any damage to him.

Left with no choice, they could only charge forth to deal with him in close quarters. However, the layer of scales on his body seemed to be impenetrable; even swords and sabers were unable to get through it. That battle created a river of blood, and the skies seemed to have darkened in grief.

Eventually, even though justice triumphed, more than thirty Tongxuan realm experts fell that day. This caused Tianxuan Kingdom's national might to fall markedly, and it took them many decades to recover from that blow.

According to rumors, the technique which allowed the Steel Armor Elder to generate scales all over his body was known as the Steel Armor Art.

But seventy years ago, when the Steel Armor Elder died, the art should have been lost along with him. Thus, Wang Hong was perplexed over how Bai Chao managed to learn the art.

"It is true that the Steel Armor Art had been lost, and the technique which Bai Chao cultivated isn't the authentic Steel Armor Art." Bai Chao said calmly.

"Then...." Clan Head Wang Hong blinked.

"After cultivating the Steel Armor Art, scales will appear all over one's body, providing one with invincible defense. On the other hand, Bai Chao's technique limits the scales to only his fist. That is to say, when he activates this cultivation technique, his fist will become as tough as steel, making it no different from a weapon!"

Clan Head Bai Ming spoke of all he knew and explained the reason why he thought Bai Chao would win, "Liu Yang's right arm is injured, and this fellow's offensive ability, in terms of his fist, is invincible. Furthermore, his strength is significantly higher than that of Liu Yang. How can Liu Yang win under such circumstances?"

"This.... If the technique Bai Chao cultivates is really the Steel Armor Art, then it will be truly difficult for Liu Yang to win...."

Clan Head Wang Hong's complexion darkened.

Those who know of this dark piece of history and how powerful the Steel Armor Elder was would know how fearsome the Steel Armor Art is.

This art surpasses the very limits of a human, granting one the strength and defensive ability of a savage beast.

Putting aside the fact that Liu Yang is injured, even if he isn't, how is it possible for him to withstand attacks of that level?

"Actually.... As long as Liu Yang isn't foolish so as to cross fists with him and instead, skirt around his opponent, he might not lose that badly!"

After contemplating for a moment, Clan Head Wang Hong said.

Even though the other party's fists are incredible, he has his own flaws as well.

His defensive and offensive ability in other regions are weak. If so, as long as Liu Yang doesn't face off with him directly and skirts around the opponent, sending in blows on the opponent's body from time to time, he might not necessarily lose.

"Let's just hope that's the case.... I'm just worried that Liu Yang may not know of this and fall for Bai Chao's ploy." Clan Head Bai Ming smiled bitterly.

Even though Bai Chao is a member of his clan, he isn't really close to him. On the contrary, he hoped for Apothecary Zhang Xuan's victory.

"This...."

Clan Head Wang Hong was about to say something when he suddenly heard the conversation between the two young men in the dueling ring.

"Liu Yang, I know that the meridians of your right arm are damaged. However, just like Wang Ying, Zhang laoshi should have treated it already, right?" Bai Chao asked

"Indeed, Zhang laoshi managed to identify my problem and personally went to the Apothecary Guild to obtain a Meridian Rejuvenation Pill for me. At this moment, my right arm has already fully recovered." Liu Yang nodded his head.

His face clearly showed his reverence and pride for his teacher.

Only a noble person like Zhang laoshi will give so much for his students, even if he will receive little in return.

"Since your arm has already recovered, I have a proposal for you.... Let's stop it with all the tricks and cross blows directly. Whoever fails to withstand the blow loses." Bai Chao sneered coldly. "Don't tell me that you dare not to, unless.... your Zhang laoshi failed to treat your arm at all, and all you've just said was still boasting."

"Let's cross blows then, do you think that I'll be afraid of you?" Hearing the other party doubt Zhang laoshi, Liu Yang flew into a rage.

"That fool...."

Watching his worries slowly becoming reality, that Liu Yang fell for Bai Chao's ploy, Wang Hong's complexion immediately turned awful.

The other party practices the Steel Armor Art, agreeing to exchange direct blows, isn't that suicidal?

"Tell Zhang laoshi that Bai Chao cultivates the Steel Armor Art and that his fist is as hard as steel, and to not allow Liu Yang to cross blows with him no matter what...."

He hurriedly instructed a guard behind him.

The guard nodded his head and hurried over to Zhang Xuan, in order to inform him of the matter.

"Zhang laoshi, I've heard of Steel Armor Art. It is said to be the secret art which the Steel Armor Elder practices. By soaking one's hands in the blood of a Steel Armor Beast, as time goes by, one's hands become as hard as steel. However, this causes the hands to lose their flexibility and sense of touch."

Zhao Ya seemed to know a lot about the Steel Armor Art and explained to Zhang Xuan.

"As hard as steel? What's the difference between doing that and wearing a steel gauntlet?"

Zhang Xuan was speechless.

Cultivation in itself is an evolution of life. The stronger one becomes, the stronger the opponents he would have to face, and the more nimble he has to be.

Yet, this fellow forged his hands into steel, losing his sense of touch as a result. No

matter how powerful the cultivation technique is, this is a fatal weakness.

How perverted does one have to be in order to create such a warped cultivation technique?

"Zhang laoshi, our clan head instructed me to tell you to stop Liu Yang from crossing blows with Bai Chao at all costs...."

Seeing how the two were still in the mood to discuss the Steel Armor Art, the guard panicked and hurriedly interjected.

"Stop him from crossing blows with Bai Chao? Why?" Zhang Xuan asked, perplexed. "I think it is good that Liu Yang agreed to it. No matter what, Bai Chao is a Fighter 3-dan cultivator, and with the augmentation from his zhenqi, regardless of whether it is his reaction speed or his agility, they are significantly superior to Liu Yang's. Even if he can't defeat Liu Yang, he can easily escape from his attacks. If it really ends up like this, the battle can potentially drag on for more than a day. Crossing blows like that can help to make up for Liu Yang's weaknesses, so why should I stop him?"

This was just like the battle between Yuan Tao and Kong Jie.

It was an unchangeable fact that Liu Yang and the others possessed lower cultivation than their opponents. If their opponents were to choose to take evasive measures, they would truly be in a rut. Since Bai Chao had decided to go head on with Liu Yang, there was no reason for Zhang Xuan to disagree.

"This...."

The guard was about to go crazy.

This isn't the problem, alright?

Haven't I phrased it out clearly for you?

The cultivation technique the other party cultivates is the Steel Armor Art, that is a fist that rivals steel. It is impossible for Liu Yang to win in a direct confrontation of fists....

He was about to persuade Zhang Xuan when he glanced at the dueling platform and saw two figures moving about. The battle had already begun.

It was already too late for Zhang Xuan to interfere.

....

"Since you're agreeable to it, let's begin."

Seeing that Liu Yang had fallen for his ploy, Bai Chao roared excitedly, stepped forward, and sent a fist toward him.

Boom!

The might of the fist compressed the air, causing a sonic boom. Just like the legends said, tiny scales could be seen on the surface of his fist and the fist appeared to be the knuckle of a savage beast rather than a human's, emanating a bizarrely intimidating aura.

"It's good that you decided to face me head on!"

Liu Yang raised his eyebrows and faced Bai Chao's strike with his own fist.

....

"He's doomed!"

He didn't expect that the guard he dispatched would fail to stop the spar between the two. Clan Head Wang Hong's face paled and his body swayed from side to side.

How can a human's fist match up to a savage beast's? Furthermore, Liu Yang's cultivation is far beneath that of Bai Chao's.

Wang Hong sighed and shut his eyes, not wanting to see Liu Yang fracture his arm and fall tragically in defeat. But at that moment, he heard Clan Head Bai Ming's hastened breathing and his abrupt exclamation.

"This.... This...."

Chapter 219

Do You Dare to Accept Our Challenge?

"Huh?"

Sensing that something was amiss, Clan Head Wang Hong quickly opened his eyes to take a look.

With just a single glance, his body swayed and he nearly passed out.

Isn't this way too exaggerated?

On the dueling platform, Liu Yang's fist was raised and his face was impassive. On the other hand, Bai Chao, who possessed the fist of steel, was kneeling on the ground. Perspiration was streaming down his forehead.

At this moment, his arm had been fractured, and his fingers were bent like twist breadsticks, as though they had encountered an indomitable force.

"Don't you cultivate.... the Steel Armor Art? Why are you so weak?"

Retracting his fist, Liu Yang stared at Bai Chao in surprise.

Because Zhao Ya was going to compete in the Teacher Evaluation, Yao Han took the liberty to look into their rivals beforehand and told him about this fellow's Steel Armor Art and his ability to morph his fists into the claws of a savage beast.

"You knew...."

Bai Chao looked as though he had seen a ghost

He thought that the enemy had accepted his challenge due to his provocation, but it turned out that.... the other party already knew. It was him who was the foolish one who charged up to him knowing nothing at all....

"Of course I know!" Liu Yang nodded his head. Then, with a bizarre expression, he

asked, "Isn't your Steel Armor Art an impressive skill that can punch through even steel? Why is it so weak?"

"Weak?"

Bai Chao was on the verge of tears.

I'm not the one who's weak, it's you who is strong, alright?

It's true that I can punch through metal, but that's only half a cun. Given the strength behind your fist, you can probably punch through two to three cun easily

(1 cun = 3.33cm)

"I get it! You didn't use your full strength, right? Come, let's trade blows once more...."

After contemplating for a moment, Liu Yang's eyes lit up.

Even though he knew that the Heaven's Path Fist Art was no ordinary skill, he had no idea over how fearsome the technique truly was as he had been practicing it alone. Even when sparring with Zheng Yang and the rest, he dared not use his full strength for fear of injuring them.

It isn't every day that he gets to meet with a fists expert, so how can he allow the opportunity to escape easily?

Besides, he was still infuriated over how the other party tried to do him in. You wish to cripple me? Fine, I'll beat all of those thoughts out of you!

"No, I'll pass...."

Before Bai Chao could speak, he saw the young man before him clench his left fist and smash it into him.

Kacha!

His left hand fractured as well.

"Wuuu...."

Bai Chao began to have suicidal thoughts.

Brother, only my right hand wields the strength of the Steel Armor Art, my left hand is just an ordinary hand....

Besides.... I said that I'll pass, why did you smash your fist into me?

The excruciating pain caused his rage to flurry. Infuriated, he opened his mouth to curse the other party, but before he could say anything, the voice of the young man before him sounded once more. "Ah, can it be possible that you have cultivated your Steel Armor Art to your head as well? Come, let me give it a try...."

"Pu!"

Hearing those words, Bai Chao spurted out a mouthful of blood.

A fracture can be healed, but if a hole were to be smashed into my brain, I will surely die for sure....

"I don't practice it with my head. Referee, I admit defeat, I admit defeat...."

Afraid that the fellow before him will really test out his theory on his head, Bai Chao immediately retreated, howling frenziedly in fear. If only his parents had given him an additional mouth, he would have surely shouted even louder....

"Admit defeat?"

The refereeing teacher immediately stepped forward.

"Un, un!" Bai Chao hurriedly nodded his head.

"You've already lost two rounds. If you lose another, it will be equivalent to losing the entire Teacher Evaluation...." The refereeing teacher said.

"I understand! I admit defeat...." Bai Chao quickly shouted.

A loss was much better than his death....

"Alright!"

Hearing his words, the refereeing teacher knew the conclusion to the Teacher Evaluation. He could not help but shake his head before announcing, "Bai Chao admits defeat! The Teacher Evaluation comes to an end and Zhang Xuan laoshi is the victor!"

"Zhang laoshi won?"

"Incredible! Those students of his are truly incredible!"

"Indeed. Other than Yuan Tao, every single one of them is amazingly powerful!"

"Zheng Yang's spear art, Wang Ying's movement technique and leg technique, and Zheng Yang's fists, all of them are fearsome!"

"Just like us, they are all freshmen. For them to be so powerful, it must be Zhang laoshi's guidance!"

"Un, after the tournament comes to an end, I will definitely acknowledge him as my teacher...."

"Wait for me, I'll go with you as well...."

....

Hearing the result announced by the refereeing teacher, the crowd broke out into a commotion.

With Yao Han's hard work previously, Zhang Xuan's reputation had gradually improved. Now witnessing the sight before them, every single of the students' faces were flushed with agitation.

What is the purpose of coming to the academy?

It is to find a good teacher!

This Zhang Xuan laoshi had utterly crushed Lu Xun laoshi right before their eyes. Just exactly how incredible are his teaching abilities?

Many students had come to the same decision. And that is to come under this Zhang laoshi's tutelage the moment the Freshmen Tournament comes to an end.

"He won.... just like that?"

While the students felt excitement, on the spectator's stand, Shen Bi Ru blinked her eyes in disbelief.

Ever since her entry into the academy, she had viewed Lu Xun as her goal, always contemplating how she can surpass him. Yet.... Before she could succeed, a fellow who possesses poor reputation managed crushed him before her.

This is Lu Xun! Furthermore, all of his students have reached Zhenqi realm....

"Shen Bi Ru, you have truly good eyes. Right now, I am feeling a little interested in this Zhang laoshi as well...."

A gleam flashed across Han Qiong's enchanting eyes.

"Mind your status, what do you mean by interested?" Hearing the words of her bosom friend, Shen Bi Ru frowned.

"It's exactly as it means, I'm interested in him! Say, if I were to consult this Zhang laoshi in the middle of the night, do you think he will open the doors to let me in?" Han Qiong chuckled captivatingly.

"I think he will beat you death!"

Scolding her bosom friend shameless silently in her mind, Shen Bi Ru harrumphed.

Honestly speaking, she was at a loss for words for this bosom friend of hers. As a teacher, she could actually say such words.

Consult? Why can't you consult in the morning, why does it have to be at night?

"Hehe, I think that you are the one who will beat me to death if I do that!"

Han Qiong chuckled.

Just like that, the two women continued bickering at the direct center of the spectator stand.

....

"Did you see that?"

Liu Ling glanced at the other two.

"Un! Lu Xun's students seem to treat this competition as a mere task. It doesn't matter to them whether they win or lose; it is all fine as long as they do not get injured."

Zhuang Xian's eyes glowed with wisdom as he spoke of his conclusion, "From this, we can conclude that the relationship between him and his students are only at the level of a deal. Even though he had helped the latter raise their abilities, in their view, it was only a mere equivalent trade."

"Indeed. His motives for raising the abilities of his students are impure, so naturally, he is unable to earn the affection of his students."

Zheng Fei shook his head.

Master teachers don't just look for talent and teaching standards in potential apprentices, they also pay close attention to the affection his students have for him.

Even though they had yet to see Zhu Hong's performance, judging from Kong Jie, Mo Xiao, Du Lei, and Bai Chao's attitude, they were able to notice something amiss.

As Lu Xun was too focused on results and winning the Teacher Evaluation, he had neglected the emotions of his students.

It was true that such focus would raise their cultivation greatly within the shortest period of time, and Lu Xun did succeed in lifting his students to become Zhenqi realm cultivators, but he failed to win their trust and respect.

After all, who respects a person who treats them as a tool?

"Zhang Xuan's students are different. They truly love him and they are willing to give their all for him."

Liu Ling nodded his head in agreement to his two friends' judgments.

Just through this competition alone, they might not have been able to see this much. However, the past few days of 'peeking' had given them a deep insight into the relationship between Zhang Xuan and his students.

Zhao Ya, Wang Ying, and the others don't cultivate just for the sake of doing so or to raise their abilities, but.... for a common goal in their hearts!

And that is to bring honor to Zhang laoshi, to give him the prestige he deserves!

They are doing this for the sake for their teacher, not for their own benefits.

Even though on both sides, the students were cultivating and raising their abilities, one faction was thinking of accomplishing a task while the other was thinking of bringing honor to their teacher in order to make him proud of them.... There was an insurmountable gap in their motivations.

"It is no wonder that he would catch Yang shi's attention. This Zhang laoshi is truly made to be a master teacher. It probably won't take long before he is of equal standing with us!" Liu Ling commented in awe.

"Indeed!"

The other two also nodded their heads.

Huala!

The three were about to continue with their heartfelt sentiments when Lu Xun, who was located by the side of the duelling ring, stood up.

After suffering a defeat at the Teacher Evaluation, he had two choices. He could apologize to Zhang Xuan in public and compensate him according to the bet that they made beforehand. Otherwise, he could leave the academy once and for all.

"What do you think Lu laoshi will choose?"

"I don't know, but I think it is more likely for him to apologize!"

"It is normal to lose. No one can guarantee that they can continue winning for their whole life!"

"Indeed, losing isn't a big deal! If he were to really leave the academy, no matter how incredible of a star teacher he is now, he will fall into misfortune after losing his roots!"

....

The crowd spoke with hushed voices.

It had been long since the last Teacher Evaluation. As the one who initiated it, Lu Xun suffered a crushing defeat. He must be feeling awful at the moment.

Everyone wanted to see how he would choose.

It wasn't anything much to apologize to Zhang Xuan. However, if he were to choose to leave the academy, it would be a shame.

Only with students can one be called a teacher. After leaving the academy and losing his students, how can he call himself a teacher?

Furthermore, if he were to choose the latter, with a record of leaving Hongtian Academy and losing the Teacher Evaluation, it was unlikely that any other academy would accept him.

"Zhang Xuan laoshi!"

Stepping onto the center of the dueling ring, Lu Xun flung his sleeves and stood tall.

Zhang Xuan glanced over.

"I've lost the Teacher Evaluation! I admit you are capable of guiding your students, but in this world, strength nevertheless reigns supreme. No matter how good you are in teaching, without sufficient ability, you will be unable to stand your ground. I want to challenge you!"

Lu Xun clenched his fists tightly in determination. His glowing acupoints displayed his formidable cultivation as a Pixue realm expert. At the same time, his powerful voice gushed into the heavens.

"You.... Do you dare to accept my challenge?"

After expending so much effort and making such thorough preparations, he nevertheless lost so tragically. His pride no longer allowed him to remain in Hongtian Academy.

But before leaving, he wanted to teach Zhang Xuan a lesson. He wanted him to understand that everything else is fake, only strength reigns supreme!

"You wish to challenge me?"

He didn't expect that the other party would make such a decision. Zhang Xuan was about to continue speaking when Zhao Ya stepped forward and stood proudly in front of Zhang Xuan, reminiscent of a goddess descending onto the mortal world.

"I will fight whoever who dares to insult my teacher. Who's with me?"

"Me!"

"Me!"

"Me!"

"Me!"

Four consecutive sounds, and Zheng Yang, Wang Ying, Liu Yang, and Yuan Tao stepped forward with firm resolutions.

"You have insulted our teacher.... the five of us will challenge you to uphold his honor. Lu Xun, do you dare to accept our challenge?"

The voices of the five roared as though thunder, resounding across the entire academy.

"Putting their lives on the line to uphold the honor of their teacher.... This is the highest level of a teacher-student relationship, Honor Defend realm?"

Liu Ling's body trembled and he abruptly stood up.

Chapter 220

Reappearance of the Golden Book

"Honest and righteous mind, actions aligned with morals. A teacher has to be of such character before they can truly earn the respect and admiration of their students, such that they are willing to go through all sorts of trials to vie for the honor of their teacher and defend his name, even if it might spell their death." Zhuang Xian's lips trembled in disbelief. "It's said that only 4-star master teachers can reach this level, but he.... he...."

Despite saying 'he' twice, he found himself unable to say a word after that.

The situation before him was simply too astonishing. It was sufficient to make all ornate words lose their radiance.

"He had merely taught these students for half a month, and furthermore, he was absent for more than ten days.... That is to say, he had been with his students for at most only four to five days.... Yet, his students are willing to defend his honor? How.... How did he manage to do this?"

Zheng Fei swallowed a mouthful of saliva.

"The students have to have a deep level of trust in their teacher before they will be willing to defend his honor. Looks like.... we have really underestimated this Zhang Xuan laoshi!"

Liu Ling sighed.

"Indeed, When I heard that Yang shi had accepted him as his student, I was really disappointed. But from the looks of it now, it seems that even if he were to acknowledge us as his teacher, we won't have anything to impart to him." Zhuang Xian smiled bitterly.

One has to be sufficiently knowledgeable in order to become another's teacher and to impart him knowledge. If one is inferior to his student, how can he guide the student?

Previously, they thought that it was a pity that such a good bud had been claimed by

Yang Shi, so they felt somewhat disappointed. However, upon seeing how the students whom Zhang Xuan had taught for just half a month was willing to put themselves on the stake to defend Zhang Xuan's honor, they felt embarrassed.

To be able to induce such trust in their students such that they were willing to challenge one who was much stronger than them, even the master teachers didn't think that they were capable of such feat.

They felt that it was fortunate that they had failed to take him as their apprentice, otherwise given how the apprentice was even more incredible than the teacher... They would definitely die of shame.

While the three master teachers felt embarrassed, a commotion had broken out at the spectator stand. Everyone was staring dumbfounded.

It is clear disrespect for a student to challenge a teacher, even asking him whether he dares to accept the challenge.

This was extremely humiliating for Lu Xun.

After losing his dignity in the Teacher Evaluation, he wanted to fix Zhang laoshi to regain some of his honor, yet.... the other party's student said that he wasn't fit to challenge their teacher, and he only could duel with them....

However....

While it felt exhilarating to do so, their actions were reckless. No matter what, they were only freshmen who had just joined the academy. Even if they had achieved significant breakthroughs in the past few days, they had only practiced for half a month. To challenge the academy's most famous celebrity teacher, not to mention, that he is a dignified Pixue realm expert, how can they possibly win?

"Look at Zhao Ya!"

The crowd was thinking whether those students were putting themselves at too much risk by challenging Lu Xun when someone suddenly shouted from the crowd.

Upon hearing the shout, everyone's gazes immediately fell on the inexplicably enchanting lady.

At this moment, the aura on her body felt like a sharp sword stabbing through the heavens, and the aura was growing stronger and sharper by the moment.

Boom!

While the aura shrouding her grew stronger, her physical body seemed to be going through a metamorphosis as well. She became visibly more beautiful and pure, as though a goddess.

"She.... is breaking through!"

"Dantian realm pinnacle, Zhenqi realm, Zhenqi realm pinnacle, Pigu realm.... Pigu realm pinnacle? How is this possible?"

To break through so many realms in just a few breaths? How can one's cultivation soar that swiftly?"

"Could it be that.... she has intentionally suppressed her cultivation in the past, or she intentionally kept herself from breaking through until now, pushing through in a single go so as to impress everyone?"

"It's possible.... Look, she has already reached Dingli realm!"

....

Looking at the Zhao Ya on the stage, everyone felt like they were going mad.

She was breaking through frenziedly!

"This.... This...."

Upon seeing the sight, Zhu Hong fell to the ground. His lips turned pale in fright.

He was hoping to cleanse himself of his humiliation the previous time, especially since he had reached Zhenqi realm. Yet, in the end, he didn't have any chance to get in the ring and as such, he felt extremely indignant and unsatisfied. Thus, he was considering whether he should find another opportunity to find Zhao Ya and the others on a private occasion to beat them up. However, upon seeing this sight, he suddenly realized how childish and laughable his thoughts were.

It was fortunate that he didn't compete with her, otherwise, given Zhao Ya's strength, wouldn't she smash him into a heap of flesh with a single blow?

Too fearsome!

How did Zhang laoshi raise such a student?

How did his students improve so swiftly?

Eventually, Zhao Ya's growth stopped at Dingli realm pinnacle. At the same time, Zhao Ya seemed to have moved a single step closer to becoming a true goddess. Every single movement of hers exuded extreme grace and lithe, making her the center of attention.

"This is the result of the awakening of the Pure Yin Body?"

City Lord Zhao Feng and Butler Yao Han subconsciously widened their eyes and clenched their fists.

Even though they already knew that Zhao Ya had such a constitution, and Zhang laoshi had specially prepared an Unravel Yin Pill for her to awaken her constitution, they didn't expect that it would be so fearsome and powerful.

To raise one's cultivation from Dantian realm to Dingli realm pinnacle in a few moments....

"Xiao Ya has truly met a good teacher!"

Recovering from the shock, City Lord Zhao Feng said.

He had felt that he had failed in the responsibility of a father, being unable to see through her daughter's Pure Yin Body and the agony she was going through.

If not for meeting Zhang laoshi, not only would she never experience such a rapid rise in cultivation, she would be tortured by this unique constitution of hers, causing her cultivation to stagnate.

"I've long heard that awakening a unique constitution would induce a qualitative change in one, causing one's cultivation to soar. I used to think that it was just nonsense but from the looks of it.... It seems like it is true. City Lord Zhao, you have a good daughter. In the future, our Tianxuan Kingdom will be relying on her to rise

through the ranks!"

Sitting by the side, Emperor Shen Zhui couldn't help but say.

Emperor Shen Zhui knew of Zhao Feng's arrival at the capital and his daughter's Pure Yin Body. Initially, he thought that she would just be slightly more talented than the average, but never in his dreams did he expect that she would be.... so incredibly talented.

In just half a month, she had evolved from a Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm pinnacle to Fighter 5-dan Dingli realm pinnacle....

This is no longer about being a genius, at this rate, she is about to smash through the heavens!

With such talents, she will definitely become a powerhouse! Perhaps, in the future, Tianxuan Kingdom will be relying on this lady to usher in an era of prosperity.

....

"You dare to challenge me?"

Unaware of the shock running through the many minds present, witnessing how Zhang Xuan's students stood in the way of his challenge, Lu Xun's face twitched.

If he knew this would happen, he would have said nothing at all.

What a dilemma. If he were to back down at this point, people will say that he is scared of them. On the other hand, if he pushes on, others will just think that he is bullying the weak.... A victory will bring him no honor, and a loss would bring further humiliation.

He felt so stifled that he was about to go crazy.

"That's right! Even if we can't defeat you, for the sake of Zhang laoshi's honor, we won't regret anything!"

Zhao Ya and the others declared with absolute resolution.

Even the weak-minded Wang Ying didn't back down from this matter.

Zhang laoshi took a special existence in their hearts. Their tremendous efforts in the past few days were all to bring him honor.

Today, the culprit who wanted to trample over his honor is right before them.... They will never allow him to escape!

Zhang laoshi, allow us to return you justice!

Zhang laoshi, allow us to clear you of the ridicule and contempt the other party had shown you!

"Those kids...."

Seeing their actions, even with Zhang Xuan's strong mental fortitude, having reached the Heart of Tranquil Water, his eyes still reddened.

At the very start, the reason why he had accepted these students was so that he wouldn't be expelled from the school, in order to avert the first crises after his reincarnation.

Yet, his seed that he had sowed had brought him an entire forest.

He wasn't a skilled teacher, and he hadn't intentionally tried to move them either. All he did was to give his all to fulfill his responsibility, not wanting to let anyone down, yet.... what he received in return moved him to tears.

He had often pondered whether what he was doing was worth it. But now, he realized that a human's heart can't be measured with gold or any other matter. Only when you treat them wholeheartedly will they treat you with equal sincerity. It isn't a matter of whether it is worth it or not, or whether he should do it or not!

"No wonder they were practicing an offensive formation. Most probably, even if Lu Xun didn't challenge me, they would still challenge him to a battle to get back at him in my stead!"

At this moment, he finally understood the reason behind the content he saw in the library previously. He felt moved.

All along, he had been puzzled over why this bunch of fellows was practicing an offensive collaboration formation. Now, it is clear that they had been preparing for

today.

They had witnessed Lu Xun forcing the Teacher Evaluation on him, leaving him in a difficult position and soiling his reputation. Even if Lu Xun hadn't provoked Zhang Xuan today, they would have definitely stepped forward, argued with the latter, and challenged him to a duel.

Even though they knew that they weren't a match; even though they knew that what they were doing was suicidal.... They nevertheless went on ahead with it.

This all.... Just to protect their teacher's honor!

These fellows....

To think that....

Trembling in agitation, Zhang Xuan tried his best to hold back his tears.

"I mustn't let them take the risk...."

Just when Zhang Xuan was about to stand up and stop them, his mind suddenly jolted. On a bookshelf in the Library of Heaven's Path, the golden book appeared once more, and a new golden page was in it.

"This book.... Can it be that it is related to the student's gratitude?"

Seeing the book being formed, Zhang Xuan was stupefied.

He had no idea when the golden book was formed before, but this time, the golden book appeared when his students put themselves at stake for him. Could the golden book be related to his students?

However, this thought disappeared as soon as it appeared.

It wasn't the time to be thinking about such matters. Standing up, he was about to walk up to instruct his students to back off, when all of them turned around at the same time to look at him.

"Zhang laoshi, this is a decision we made. We hope that you will not interfere."

Zhao Ya's clear eyes looked forward. With a slight smile, her voice sounded loudly in the surroundings, and unwavering determination could be heard.

"You have given so much to us, we just want to give something to you in return. Also, we wish to display to everyone the results of your tutelage, so that everyone will know that...."

"Your dignity.... cannot be trampled on!"

"Your honor.... cannot be sullied!"

Witnessing the determined and firm gazes of his students, Zhang Xuan's body stiffened and he hesitated.

"We hope that teacher can agree to our selfish request!"

Zhao Ya clasped her hands.

"We hope that teacher can agree to our selfish request!" The other four chorused after her.

"Alright, be careful then. If you aren't a match for him, just admit defeat. Don't worry, your teacher is here. No one will dare to trample on me, and no one will be able to trample on me!"

With his both hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan lifted his eyebrows. A powerful aura suddenly surged forth from his body, reaching even the heavens.

Tables and chairs in the surroundings broke into smithereens under the pressure of the intense aura.

"Tongxuan realm.... pinnacle?"

A wave of exclamations sounded.

Chapter 221

Coiling Dragon Hands

Complete silence.

Everyone's eyes narrowed and their faces paled.

Isn't Zhang laoshi well known for being a trash of the academy?

Didn't they say that his cultivation is low, and his ability to impart knowledge is lacking?

Tongxuan realm pinnacle.... As an expert who can break through to achieve Half-Zongshi at any moment, he is nearly an invincible existence in Tianxuan Kingdom!

You call such a cultivation low? Are you kidding me?

"Looks like.... all of the previous news are true. He just wants to keep a low profile and doesn't want to expose his strength...."

"I'm afraid, only a person with such capability can groom students like Zhao Ya and Liu Yang!"

"Tongxuan realm pinnacle.... Even the principal doesn't wield such strength. Yet, such an expert is only a low-level teacher. The academy must truly be blind!"

"It is all due to Elder Shang Chen's oppression. Shameless! Such people deserve to be expelled!"

....

Zhang Xuan's display of his cultivation caused the crowd, on both the spectator stand and the stage, to enter a frenzy.

Everyone had thought all along that he is just a Pixue realm cultivator. Never in their wildest dreams did they expect that he would be a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert, a

top-notch expert in Tianxuan Kingdom!

Witnessing the situation, Lu Xun's body froze and his face turned ghastly white.

He had always prided himself on his superior talent that no one could match up to. Never once did he think that.... the fellow, whom he had been provoking, had already reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle! Furthermore, he wasn't even twenty!

Is he still a human?

And I challenged such an expert to a duel?

Is my brain damaged?

Regardless of teaching my students or my own cultivation, I have been defeated utterly!

"The students vie for the honor of their teacher while the teacher serves as the fortress of his students. The students and teacher in perfect complement, this is the model relationship!"

"This is the level we hope to reach! Yang shi sure is incredible, to be able to spot such a gem."

Taking in the sight, the three master teachers stood up abruptly and their faces flushed with agitation.

A student needs a good teacher, and a teacher needs good students.

However, does being a good student or a good teacher refer to one's talent and cultivation?

Nope, it refers to trust, solidarity, and responsibility.

These students, right before their very eyes, are willing to give their all for Zhang laoshi. On the other hand, Zhang laoshi serves as their fortress. Regardless of the waves that come rushing toward them, he will be able to stand firm as their stronghold, providing them a sanctuary.

This is what a teacher and student relationship should be like, truly the highest level

of a teacher-student relationship.

"Yes!"

Seeing how their teacher did not tell them to stop, granting them free reins and turning into a powerful fortress backing them instead, Zhao Ya excitedly turned around to face Lu Xun.

"Lu laoshi.... Let's start!"

"I accept your duel, but I will not take advantage of you, students. Let's go to the Teacher Dueling Platform!"

Knowing that he was unable to avoid this duel, Lu Xun agreed candidly.

There is a specialized stage for duels between students and teachers and it is known as the Teacher Dueling Platform. There, teachers will suppress their cultivation to lower themselves to the student's level and duel with them.

Back then, the duel between Zheng Yang and Zhou Tian was held there.

"There's no need for us to fight on the Teacher Dueling Platform. We'll do it here, and there's no need for you to suppress your cultivation!"

Yuan Tao smiled and stepped forward.

Earlier, when he fought with Kong Jie, he appeared to be an ordinary underhanded fellow. However, after taking a single step forward, the air around him changed and he seemed to be an entirely different person this moment. Even though his cultivation remained at the same Juxi realm advanced stage, his disposition had changed tremendously. This very moment, he seemed to be like a dragon soaring through the heavens.

"Brothers, I will be going first!"

Roaring, Yuan Tao charged toward Lu Xun. Without any moves or technique whatsoever, he simply charged frenziedly toward the latter.

"Can it be that.... he had hidden his cultivation as well?"

"But that's impossible! Half a month ago, when he attended the entrance examinations, he very clearly had barely reached Fighter 1-dan Juxi realm primary stage. Being able to reach the advanced stage within such a short period of time is already an extremely scary feat, so how is it possible that he has hidden his cultivation?"

"Even if he hadn't hidden his cultivation, it is impossible for him to be Juxi realm advanced stage. We have been fooled by his delinquent outer appearance. Honestly speaking, even if Kong Jie was careless, it is impossible for an ordinary Juxi realm to expel him from the stage with a single fist."

"This...."

Upon seeing that Yuan Tao being the first to charge forth and sensing the change in his disposition, not feeling any fear despite facing a Pixue realm expert like Lu Xun, everyone burst into a commotion.

Just earlier, when this fellow fought with Kong Jie, everyone thought that he doesn't possess any real capability. They thought that he is just a shameless and underhanded fellow. Yet, at this moment, they realized that that isn't the case!

No matter what, Lu laoshi is a Pixue realm expert! Even Dingli realm cultivators will be hesitant to face him, yet as a Juxi realm cultivator, he charged straight at him. Through this, it can be seen that there is more to him beneath the surface.

"Hmph!"

Upon seeing that Yuan Tao was the first to charge toward him, Lu Xun's complexion darkened. He immediately sent a palm strike straight at the other party.

In order not to cause any casualty, he only used ten percent of his strength. Even so, given his strength as a Pixue realm pinnacle, that was more than enough to shatter stones and smash through tree trunks.

However, not only did that strong might not hinder the movement of that fatty in any way upon hitting him squarely, it seemed to have incited the other party's hot-bloodedness. Yuan Tao squeezed his body together, placing his shoulders in front of his chest to maximize the impact of the charge.

It was neither a 【Mountain Crush】 or a 【Tree Ram】 , it was just an ordinary charge

reminiscent to that of the savage beasts.

Peng!

It sounded like the beat of a drum and Lu Xun's face turned red. Under the impact, he retreated two steps backward.

"What?"

Lu Xun's eyes narrowed.

Everyone knew that Lu Xun's cultivation had reached Pixue realm, but no one knew that he actually specialized more in the training of his physical body.

Due to his obsession, he had his father, Master Lu Chem, replicate all books on the training of physical body in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault and keep them at home.

Just this by itself showed a lot about his physical body cultivation. As such, even though he could have easily dodged Yuan Tao's judge, he stood his ground.

He thought that the student was just a fellow who possessed some brute strength. Not even in his dreams did he expect Yuan Tao's charge to be so fearsome.

Despite his well-trained physical body, Yuan Tao's charge managed to flush his face red and he nearly spurted a mouthful of blood from the force.

If he were to suffer another few more of such charges, he would not need to think of battling any further!

"He managed to knock Lu laoshi back?"

"This fellow is way too scary!"

The spectators were all cultivators. Even though they had no idea how strong Yuan Tao's charge really was, they could notice the change in Lu laoshi's complexion. They were so shocked that their jaws nearly hit the ground.

For a Pixue realm pinnacle expert to be knocked back, how much strength does he possess?

With such might, bodies of typical Dingli realm experts will probably be shattered!

The student who was knocked out by Yuan Tao's fist previously, Kong Jie, happened to witness this sight right after he woke up. Greatly terrified, his face paled and he fainted once again. At the same time, he was thankful that the other party hadn't used this move against him. Otherwise, fainting would just be a small matter. He could have been crippled for life.

"Looks like I've underestimated you...."

Retreating two steps backward, Lu Xun immediately stabilized his breathing. Feeling a dull ache in his chest, he narrowed his eyes and glared coldly at the fatty before him. The disdain in his eyes had disappeared without a trace.

Just from the other party's charge, he was able to tell that the lad before him possesses strength, physical durability, and defense far superior to his.

That is to say, in a purely physical brawl, he will be able to easily kill a Dingli realm expert!

When did Zhang Xuan find such a freak?

"Hehe, this isn't the only thing that you've underestimated!"

After a successful first attack, Yuan Tao chuckled lightly and charged forward once more.

"Hmph!"

Seeing the other party use the same attack once more, Lu Xun became serious. With a slight flick of his hands, his zhenqi formed a sphere of energy before him. In an instant, the charging Yuan Tao, as though a fish sucked into a whirlpool, staggered two rounds before charging beside Lu Xun, not even grazing him in the slightest.

"【Coiling Dragon Hands】! It's Coiling Dragon Hands...."

Someone from the crowd exclaimed.

"What's Coiling Dragon Hands?" Someone asked doubtfully.

"It's a long-lost battle technique. It's said that when one reaches a major accomplishment in the skill, he will be able to form a sphere of zhenqi outside of his body, warding off all attacks! I always thought that it was a legend, but to think that.... Lu laoshi is actually able to execute it!"

Those who were well-aware of the skill were in disbelief.

"Warding off all attacks? This.... Isn't the battle technique too overpowered!" The one who asked previously was astonished.

Being able to ward off all attacks means that even if one isn't able to triumph over his opponent, he will not lose either.

Fearsome!

At this moment, the crowd, who had been awed by Yuan Tao's strength previously, looked at Lu Xun with great respect.

It is true that it is impossible for a useless person to wield great prestige. For Lu Xun to be able to create such an incredible reputation for himself in Hongtian Academy, he does indeed live up to his name.

"Indeed!" The others nodded their heads in agreement.

"If he can ward off all attacks, doesn't that mean that he can't be wounded?" Another person commented.

"All battle techniques have their own flaws. Even though the Coiling Dragon Hands is an incredible skill, it isn't invincible. Rumor has it that as long as one focuses their strength at one point, such that the might at that point surpasses the strength the user displaying the skill possesses, one will be able to break the Coiling Dragon Hands easily! That's to say, given that Lu laoshi possesses around 45 ding of strength, one has to display a might exceeding 45 ding at a single point to overcome this move."

As the person said so, he lifted his head to look at Zhao Ya and the others. "Zhang laoshi would be able to overcome this move easily, but.... I'm afraid it'll be hard for his students. Unless someone has managed to comprehend the Weapon Intent, which would allow them to overcome the zhenqi sphere easily.... But how is that possible for a group of Dantian realm students...."

At this, he shook his head.

Weapon Intent, this is the level which all cultivators hope to achieve. Countless people viewed it as their ultimate goal and had strived for it, but even so, there isn't a single successful case in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. If so, how can a student achieve such level?

"You're right!"

The crowd nodded their heads in agreement. No matter what, these students are on Fighter 2-dan cultivators. No matter how strong they are, how can their strength exceed a Pixue realm pinnacle expert? Even more so, how is it possible that any one of them have comprehended the Weapon Intent?

It seems like the challenge is only a joke. With the invincible defense created by the 【Coiling Dragon Hands】 , it is impossible for Lu Xun laoshi to be defeated by them.

"Yuan Tao, I can't allow you to hog the spotlight. Allow me!"

Everyone was beginning to think that Zhang Xuan's students would fail when a roar echoed. Zheng Yang stepped forward with large steps. Without any complex movements, the spear he held in his hands shot out as though a dancing dragon.

Even though it was just a single simple move, within its simplicity contained the profound essence of a spear, making it impossible to dodge or withstand it.

Wuuuuu!

The spear was so quick that the air seemed to be unable to bear the overwhelming pressure, sounding as though it would shatter into countless pieces at any moment,

Along with the piercing of the spear, Zheng Yang's aura grew stronger and stronger. Even though he only possessed the strength of a Fighter 2-dan Dantian realm, it felt as though he had melded together as one with his spear, as though he was the spear, and the spear was him.

Peng!

The spear struck Lu Xun's zhenqi sphere and a sonic boom resounded across the entire field.

Deng deng deng deng!

Lu Xun's face turned ghastly pale and he retreated four steps backward.

The Coiling Dragon Hands had been broken!

"Spear Intent? Is that Spear Intent?"

Wang Chao stood up abruptly.

Chapter 222

Pummeling Lu Xun (First Half)

He was the most highly skilled spear user in the entire of Hongtian Academy.

As far as he can remember, he had been training in the way of the spear. Day after day, year after year, he had long regarded the weapon as an essential part of himself.

Even so, he is still a huge distance away from forging Spear Intent.

He thought that such a state only exists in the faraway legends, and it is impossible for him to ever achieve it. Yet, never in his dreams did he expect that.... he would see it on a teenage boy.

Even though the Spear Intent he had forged is still in the most primitive and simple form, a far way off from its complete mature state, it is nevertheless a bud containing incredible potential. With sufficient time, it can ripen and grow into a gigantic tree.

"How did he do it?"

Previously, when Mo Xiao said that he is unable to compare up to Zheng Yang and admitted defeat, Wang Chao thought that it was a great humiliation to the Wang Clan's spearmanship. But now, upon seeing Zheng Yang's move, he realized that the Wang Clan's spearmanship is trash before it!

This move that is infused with the Spear Intent cannot be countered by any other moves.

In fact.... Even if he were the one facing it, he would be helpless!

If Zheng Yang's cultivation were at the same level as him, he can definitely kill him with that single move!

"Can it be.... is this the move that father learned?"

Suddenly, a thought flashed in Wang Chao's mind.

A while ago, his father, Wang Chong, spent an astronomical sum to learn a spear art and after which, he had been secluding himself to comprehend Spear Intent. All along, Wang Chao had thought that no move would be worth this money, but after seeing Zheng Yang's stroke....

Three million was a small sum to pay for this move. Even if it cost ten million, twenty million, or even all of their family fortune, it would be worth it!

Before, the butler had said that the one who imparted his father the spear art was an apothecary, but he hadn't paid much heed to it then. However, upon seeing Guild Leader Ouyang and the other apothecaries here, claiming that they are here to watch Apothecary Zhang's duel.... Can it be that Zhang Xuan laoshi is him?

Wang Chao's body swayed and blood welled up at the back of his throat, threatening to spurt at any moment.

"Zhang laoshi can be considered as half a teacher to me since he has imparted this move to me. Next time, when you see him, you have to call him grand teacher or.... grandpa!"

Shaking his head to toss aside this ridiculous thought, Wang Chao suddenly heard a powerful voice sounding beside him. Lifting his head to take a look, he saw his father walking toward him.

Given the commotion that the Teacher Evaluation had caused, even Wang Chong couldn't resist his curiosity and came to take a look.

"Grand teacher? Grandpa?"

Wang Chao's face turned pale and he was on the verge of tears.

Not just him, the other spectators were also completely silent.

Those who were aware of the Coiling Dragon Hands were even more shocked, and if not for their self-control, they might have torn out their hair in frustration and disbelief.

Even though they were unable to exactly recognize the Spear Intent in Zheng Yang's movement, just by the fact that he was able to break the Coiling Dragon Hands with his spear showed that he has already reached such a state!

A sixteen-year-old student comprehending Weapon Intent?

How can there be such a ridiculous matter in the world?

If so, how fearsome will his teacher who imparted him the art be?

"Looks like Mo Xiao didn't admit defeat for his friend's sake, but because he is truly not a match for him!"

"Indeed, even Fighter 4-dan cultivators will be unable to withstand such a move."

"What an incredible technique, did it really come from Zhang laoshi?"

"Zhang laoshi.... Not only are his movement, leg, and fist techniques incredible, even his spear art is at the same level as well?"

All of the students were astonished.

"Just a few days and he.... has improved again!"

Mo Xiao's body shuddered. Looking at Zhang Xuan, the desire in his eyes could no longer be curbed.

A voice echoed in his heart....

I must acknowledge him as my teacher!

....

"Damn it!"

Having his Coiling Dragon Hands broken by Zheng Yang's spear, Lu Xun felt a suffocating sensation in his chest. A savage expression emerged on his face and he let off a loud howl. He was about to charge forth to deal with the exhausted Zheng Yang when he suddenly heard a faint sound. Unknowingly, Liu Yang appeared beside him and his fist was headed straight for him.

At that moment, Wang Ying also appeared in the air above him and she had sent a kick straight at him.

Si la!

The punch and kick were so swift that it tore the air into half. Even before hitting its target, it instilled shiver into its target.

The two moves may not be as powerful as the spear before, but even so, they shouldn't be underestimated. Even with Lu Xun's powerful physical body, he would incur significant injuries if he were to be struck by it.

"Hmph!"

With an awful complexion, Lu Xun's body swayed and as though a butterfly treading through the flowers, he retreated two steps.

Battle Technique [Butterfly Steps]! As though a butterfly soaring between flowers, the move grants its user nimble and unreadable movements.

Dodging the punch and the kick, Lu Xun prepared to launch a counterattack, but at that moment, he felt his entire body turn cold, as though he had been placed into an ice cavern.

As his vision blurred, a ridiculously beautiful lady appeared in his sight. At the same time, a smooth and flawless hand reached straight for his chest.

Lu Xun's eyes narrowed. Even though he was astonished, as a Pixue realm pinnacle expert who had gone through hundreds of battle, he reacted without hesitation. He counterattacked with a palm strike immediately.

Battle Technique [Tower Overthrow Seal]! It is said to possess the strength to topple towers and shake mountains!

Boom!

The Tower Overthrow Seal met the enemy's palm.

Zhao Ya's body quivered briefly before being sent flying back.

She was only a Dingli realm pinnacle cultivator, she was still far from matching a Pixue realm pinnacle expert like Lu Xun.

However, Lu Xun didn't fare well either. The pure yin zhenqi which Zhao Ya emitted contained the nature of extreme coldness, causing his body to tremble uncontrollably. He retreated three steps backward but was unable to rid himself of the chill in his body.

Furthermore, a surge of cold zhenqi had invaded his meridians, making it impossible for him to neutralize it within a short period of time.

Five people and six attacks, Lu Xun had merely received a blow from each of them, but he retreated eleven steps.

The crowd was left completely dumbfounded.

That was Lu Xun laoshi, the number one star teacher of Hongtian Academy. Even though his cultivation wasn't unparalleled in the academy, there was nearly no Pixue realm cultivator who could match him.

But just like that, he was forced back by a group of Fighter 2-dan and Fighter 5-dan students. If they had not witnessed it for themselves, they would have never believed it.

"So, this is the offensive collaboration formation that they had been working on?"

Zhang Xuan knew that Zhao Ya and the others had been secretly working on a collaboration formation, but he had never actually seen them execute it. Finally witnessing it now, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows knitted together.

"Fine. Truthfully speaking, I have underestimated you brats. You do possess the qualifications to challenge me!"

Lu Xun declared as he stabilized his breathing. After having been forced to retreat continuously under the assault of a few juniors, he no longer dared to underestimate them. On the contrary, a grim expression had appeared on his face.

"I also think that we are qualified to challenge you. Actually, Lu laoshi, by crossing blows with you, we have already vented the resentment in Zhang laoshi's stead. How about this? Can we just consider it a draw? If we go on like this, we will only end up hurting each other...."

Yuan Tao chuckled as he stepped forward.

"Draw?" Lu Xun harrumphed coldly. "Your attacks are indeed novel, and you have indeed managed to catch me off guard earlier. However, now that you've revealed all the tricks up your sleeves, there's nothing else for me to fear...."

What Lu Xun said rang true.

Even though the attacks of the five weren't weak, they hadn't prepared enough moves to account for the entire duel. Each of them knew only a single powerful move, and it would have worked against ordinary Pixue realm cultivators. However, for a potential master teacher like Lu Xun, it was far from being sufficient.

After all, both his eyes and comprehension of battle techniques were far from what the five could match.

"You're right. How about this, why don't I.... discuss the matter with them and admit defeat?"

Yuan Tao stepped forward as a look of conflict appeared on his face. When he came to just a few steps away from Lu Xun, his eyebrows shot up suddenly as he charged forward.

"Hmph, the same trick?"

After the precedent with Kong Jie, Lu Xun was already guarded against this fellow. Upon seeing him charge forward, he harrumphed coldly.

Because I wasn't guarded against your charge for the first time, you managed to send me back two steps. But the second time, I easily warded off your charge with my Coiling Dragon Hands. Yet, you still dare to use the same technique on me for the third time....

Aren't you underestimating me too much?

A cold glint flashed across Lu Xun's eyes. Raising his hands, he prepared himself to ward off Yuan Tao's charge. However, before he even came into contact with the fellow, the fellow abruptly stopped and hugged him.

The change was too sudden and so unexpected that Lu Xun didn't have the time to react to it.

Furthermore, it was unthinkable for one to hug another in the midst of a battle.

Kacha!

In an instant, the fatty had Lu Xun completely in his grasp, having locked his arms around the other party's body tightly.

"You...."

For a teacher to be hugged by a student, Lu Xun's complexion looked extremely dark. With a twist of his body, he knocked at Yuan Tao.

Peng!

A dull thud.

The force behind that knock was in no way inferior to his fist; even an ordinary Pixue realm expert would be vomiting blood due to the impact of that blow. The body of the fatty that was wrapped around him jerked, but the grip didn't loosen in the least.

He actually withstood such a powerful knock!

"His defense is incredible...." Lu Xun's eyes narrowed.

No matter how foolish he could be, he immediately understood that the specialty of the fatty wasn't his charge, but.... his defense!

To think that he had neglected this fact from the very start.

"Hurry up!"

Yuan Tao howled as he hugged Lu Xun tightly.

Hu!

Before he could even finish his words, a spear whistled and flew straight toward Lu Xun.

"Damn it!"

Sensing the fearsome might behind the spear, Lu Xun knew that he would be over if the spear were to hit him. Thus, he roared and his feet abruptly pushed against the ground.

The powerful force against the ground pushed him, along with Yuan Tao, three chi above from the ground, dodging that fatal move.

"Come down!"

Even though he managed to dodge the Zheng Yang's spear, he wasn't able to evade Liu Yang's fist. With a cold harrumph, a strike from the Heaven's Path Fist Art hit him straight in his back.

Pu!

A mouthful of fresh blood spewed from his mouth.

"If this goes on, I might really lose to a bunch of youngsters...."

Lu Xun lifted his eyebrows and madness could be seen in his eyes.

If I don't shake off this fatty quickly, I might really lose today!

Even though Zhang Xuan's five students were young and possessed weak cultivation, the battle technique they learned were simply too bizarre. Even a person with a powerful physical body like Lu Xun found it hard to take their blows.

"Let go!"

Roaring furiously, he sent his right elbow directly at Yuan Tao.

This time, he used his full strength. With solely the strength of his physical body, he could even pierce through metal.

Peng!

The powerful elbow struck Yuan Tao squarely on his chest.

Pu!

Yuan Tao's face turned red.

Even though the pain clearly showed through his face, his grip didn't weaken in the least. At this moment, he seemed to have become a giant chain, sealing the opponent's body entirely, refusing to budge no matter how hard the opponent struggles.

"You...."

Not expecting that an elbow strike at his full force would not be able to shake him off, amidst Lu Xun's anger, he was taken aback as well.

How is this a duel? It feels more like a fight to the death!

In that moment of daze, a kick landed straight on his chest.

At the same moment, a pair of white and flawless palms landed on his body as well.

Peng peng!

Two crisp sounds echoed in the air. Lu Xun felt a dull pain in his chest before flying backward.

Chapter 223

Pummeling Lu Xun (Second Half)

After flying a dozen meters backward, he crashed violently onto the ground. The impact created a huge crater on the ground.

Below him, Yuan Tao suffered nearly eighty percent of the impact. But even so, he hadn't loosened his grip in the slightest, locking the latter firmly in place.

"What kind of fighting style is that?"

"Does he have a dying wish? He'll really die like this...."

"He won't. He has an extraordinary defense and even given Lu Xun laoshi's strength, it would take a significant amount of time to shake him away. Clearly, Zhao Ya and the others wouldn't grant him that amount of time."

....

Seeing how Yuan Tao firmly held onto Lu Xun laoshi, not even budging in the least as if he cared not about dying, everyone's mouth twitched.

It is just a duel, is there a need to go so far?

At this rate, if Lu Xun were to go on a rampage, he might really get beaten to death!

Peng peng peng!

While everyone was overwhelmed by shock, Lu Xun didn't remain idle. Using his elbow, he struck Yuan Tao's chest repeatedly, and every single strike held astonishing might. Under the barrage of attacks, Yuan Tao's face grew increasingly pale.

Even though he possesses the Emperor Bloodline, he had only activated a tenth of it. While he had no problem warding off the attacks of Dingli realm cultivators easily, it was clearly insufficient for him to do the same for Lu Xun, who is strong even among Pixue realm pinnacle experts.

"Hurry up!"

Enduring the excruciating pain, Yuan Tao hissed through gritted teeth.

Boom!

Right afterward, a spear shot into view midair.

Having missed his previous strike, Zheng Yang had placed all of his strength into this blow. Executing the strength of the Heaven's Path Spear Art to the limits of his ability, under the augmentation of Spear Intent, the spear shot straight toward Lu Xun as though a shooting star.

"Damn it!"

Facing the spear, Lu Xun narrowed his eyes and hurriedly backed away. Even so, the spear managed to inflict a wound on his chest, leaving a trail of red blood sailing in midair.

"You aren't going to escape!"

Shortly, a blurred figure appeared before Lu Xun. With a flip of her palm, it felt as though the heavens was crushing down.

Battle Technique [Falling Heavens]! The descent of the palm induces terror in all!

Of Zhang Xuan's students, the one with the best circumstances for cultivation wasn't Wang Ying. It was Zhao Ya.

Her father was the city lord of Baiyu City, and his position was only inferior to that of Emperor Shen Zhui in the entire Tianxuan Kingdom. All kinds of battle techniques and resources were at her disposal, and this Falling Heavens was one of the strongest techniques in Baiyu City.

Due to her insufficient cultivation, she was unable to practice it before. However, after her Pure Yin Body was awakened and her strength reached Dingli realm pinnacle, she became much more powerful than even the ordinary teachers in the academy, allowing her to train and execute this move.

As expected of a top-notch battle technique in Baiyu City, even before the strike

landed, a frigid air had already frozen the surroundings.

"Hmph!"

Held firmly by Yuan Tao, Lu Xun was unable to parry the move. Even so, he didn't panic. His zhenqi flurried and he turned half a round on the spot. As such, Yuan Tao stood between him and Zhao Ya, turning into the fatty into a meat shield for him.

If Zhao Ya were to go ahead with that strike, Falling Heavens would definitely land on her comrade.

"Lu Xun laoshi is.... throwing aside his dignity!"

"Indeed, to be using the student as a meat shield, shameless!"

"Actually, this shows that the few students exert a great amount of pressure on him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have thrown aside his pride to do this."

"As a Pixue realm pinnacle expert, Lu Xun laoshi is ranked at the first or second place among the elders in the academy. Yet, to be forced to such a state by five freshmen who have enrolled for just half a month.... Scary!"

"However, it will still be difficult for Zhao Ya and the others to win. With Yuan Tao serving as a meat shield, they will be hesitant to attack Lu Xun laoshi. However, if Yuan Tao were to let go, Lu laoshi, with his speed and movement technique, would be able to escape easily from their assault."

The wiser experts saw through the crux of the problem.

Previously, as Lu laoshi still held considerations for his reputation, he hadn't resorted to his other means. However, now forced to a corner, he decided to use Yuan Tao as a meat shield. This leaves the other students at a loss of whether to strike him or not, thus causing them to fall into a disadvantageous position.

"Look, Zhao Ya isn't ceasing her attack...."

Everyone thought that the battle would end in a standstill when they noticed that Zhao Ya's Falling Heaven didn't slow in the least. It landed straight on Yuan Tao's body.

Hu!

As though striking a leather, there wasn't a loud impact. It seemed as if Zhao Ya had withdrawn her power at the very last moment, and the palm that had fallen on Yuan Tao's body was only an ordinary strike.

"Seems that she held back. Otherwise, Yuan Tao would have definitely collapsed from the simultaneous attacks from both in front and behind him!"

A person commented. However, right after that, another exclamation rang.

"Something is amiss, look at Lu Xun laoshi!"

Everyone hurriedly turned to look at Lu laoshi.

With a glance, their eyes narrowed.

Right after Zhao Ya's palm landed on Yuan Tao, who was hugging Lu laoshi, the latter shuddered and his face turned pale.

Clearly, the strike that landed on Yuan Tao had struck him instead.

"It is the modification of Falling Heavens, Descending Heavens!"

City Lord Zhao Feng abruptly stood up, and his disbelief reflected in his eyes. "Descending Heavens can strike a person even at a distance. However, the skill is extremely difficult to practice, requiring one to undergo all kinds of pain. More importantly, one has to at least execute a hundred thousand palm strikes before he can grasp the skill.... It has only been four days since Zhao Ya awakened her unique constitution. For her to be able to execute it.... What kind of pain did she undergo in the past few days?"

Long-range attacks are difficult to grasp, even if one is talented. It requires relentless experimentation and practice.

Even using the most conservative estimates, it would require one to at least practice at the skill at least a hundred thousand times. That was to say, she had practiced the skill over a hundred thousand times over the course of four days?

What hardship did this daughter of his suffer in these four days?

And what was it that made her persevere like this?

After all, repeating such a boring and dull movement over and over again isn't easy, and back then, he had nearly given up himself, needless to say, a sixteen to seventeen-year-old girl like her.

"It is all for victory!"

Yao Han exclaimed with reddened eyes.

He had witnessed the hardship that his xiaojie had gone through in the past few days personally.

In the past, she wasn't serious in her cultivation, allowing her mind to wander during training. Otherwise, as the young mistress of a city lord, possessing countless profound battle techniques, cultivation techniques, and the guidance of experts at her disposal, even though she was affected by her pure yin body, it was impossible for her to still be a merely Fighter 1-dan despite having reached sixteen years of age.

Initially, he thought that xiaojie wouldn't be able to persevere practicing such a difficult technique, but she managed to pull through.... Her determination far exceeded his expectations.

"Victory?"

"Yes. She wants to win for Zhang laoshi. All of them.... don't want to lose!"

"Don't want to lose?"

Turning his attention to the five students on the stage, he narrowed his eyes.

As a city lord and an expert, he understood how difficult cultivation could get. How much hardship did the five children have to go through within half a month in order to be able to rival a star teacher, even forcing him to abandon his pride?

"What kind of magic does this Zhang laoshi possess, to be able to induce such change in Xiao Ya and forge such strong camaraderie among his students?"

City Lord Zhao Feng glanced at Zhang laoshi, and respect for the latter reflected in his eyes.

He understood his own daughter well. It was surely this Zhang laoshi's credit for such

changes to appear within her in just a short span of half a month.

Furthermore, even though the formation Zhang Xuan's students were using was rather crude, their teamwork could be said to be impeccable. Taking, for example, Zhao Ya's Descending Heavens, as she had yet to master the skill, if Yuan Tao were to resist in the very least, it was likely for the blow to have struck him instead of Lu Xun.

To remain completely unguarded in the face of such a powerful technique, just how much trust did he have in the other party in order to be able to do so?

The crowd was left completely dumbfounded and the entire field went silent. On the other hand, Lu Xun, who was hiding behind Yuan Tao, was infuriated, and he was just a step away from going crazy.

He thought that these fellows only had that single ace up their sleeves, and he never expected them to have done so much preparation in advance. Furthermore, they showed incredible tenacity and were willing to endure all pain for the sake of victory.

Suppressing the frost in his body, Lu Xun retreated once more.

Hu!

But before he could get away, another blurred figure appeared before him.

Wang Ying!

At this instant, the embarrassment she possessed during her fight with Du Lei was completely absent. On the contrary, she now carried unwavering determination.

She sent a kick straight toward Lu Xun.

With Wang Ying in front and Zhao Ya at the back, Lu Xun had nowhere to escape. Furiously driving the zhenqi in his body, the muscles throughout his entire body tightened.

Peng!

Lu Xun felt a powerful force striking him on his chest. Once again, he was sent flying.

The strength of the kick far surpassed his imagination. If not for having experienced

it personally, he wouldn't have dared believe that such a powerful attack could come from such a gentle lady.

No wonder Du Lei nearly died from her kick! This lass's leg technique is indeed astounding.

Putong!

Falling on the ground once more, Lu Xun felt a dull ache in his chest.

Having received several blows consecutively, despite his powerful defense and overwhelming strength, he found himself about to cave in.

Pu!

He vomited a mouthful of blood and his face lightened by another shade.

Initially, he thought that he could make a quick job out of these students, but to think that he would land in such a tragic state instead.

"Let go of me!"

The main reason why he had been suffering attacks after attacks without any chance of counterattack was Yuan Tao's grip. Lu Xun glared at Yuan Tao before roaring. He gathered zhenqi on his head and crashed it forcefully onto Yuan Tao's head.

Peng!

As their heads crashed together, Yuan Tao felt faint-headed and fresh blood streamed from his forehead.

Even though he possessed incredible defense, he was only able to endure the attacks up to the level of a Dingli realm expert. The other party had augmented his attack with zhenqi, causing Yuan Tao to sustain a severe injury instantly.

"You wish to get rid of me? Dream on! I will never let go even if I were to die!"

Yuan Tao felt giddy and his face was dyed with crimson blood, but this only increased his determination. Roaring furiously, not only did he not release his grip, he even tightened it, making it difficult for Lu Xun to breathe.

"Damn it, don't you fear death? If I were to continue banging your head like that, you will die...."

Seeing how the lad was reluctant to let go, Lu Xun seethed with rage.

Given Lu Xun's powerful offense, if he were to continue knocking the other party like that, even though Yuan Tao's defense wasn't weak, he might really die....

Does this fellow really not fear death?

Lu Xun was astonished. He was considering whether he should really knock this fellow to death when a gust of wind cut through his skin, and a mighty force shot straight at him.

A spear stopped right before his throat.

Zheng Yang had been waiting for an opportunity all along. Upon noticing Lu Xun's momentary distraction, he dashed forward immediately and executed the Heaven's Path Spear Art augmented by Spear Intent. Within the blink of an eye, he was already before Lu Xun, prepared to pierce the other party's throat.

The spear was like an arrow on the bowstring, ready to shoot through the other party's neck at any moment. Standing upright, Zheng Yang stared at Lu Xun with sharp eyes.

"Lu laoshi.... You've lost!"

Chapter 224

Call Him Uncle Now!

"I've lost? It's too early to say that!"

Watching the spear right before his eyes, Lu Xun felt extremely humiliated. With a roar, he gritted his teeth and dashed forward.

"Un?"

Not expecting that the other party himself would dash straight toward his spear, Zheng Yang was taken aback. He retracted his arm instinctively.

With this action, Zheng Yang lost his advantage. Stepping against the ground, Lu Xun executed the Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps, forming multiple shadows at once. In the blink of an eye, he was already right before Zheng Yang and he rammed his body against him.

He was still hugged firmly by Yuan Tao and his hands were locked, so he could only use this move.

Peng! Pu!

He didn't expect that the other party would fight back even with the spear right before his neck. Unprepared for this, Zheng Yang was struck squarely and his face flushed. Crimson blood spurted out of his mouth and his entire body was sent flying backward.

"Too shameless...."

"How can a star teacher of the academy behave like this?"

"Damn it...."

Seeing how Lu Xun refused to admit defeat despite the clear outcome, the crowd immediately burst into an uproar.

"Unforgivable!"

Seeing how the teacher was shamelessly fighting back despite having clearly lost, even injuring Zheng Yang in the process, Zhao Ya's face turned red with anger. Her body flickered faintly, she appeared before Lu Xun. In the midst of doing so, her wrist snapped and a sword had appeared in her hands.

She had learned swordsmanship from young, and because Lu laoshi was at a numerical disadvantage, she chose not to wield it. However, upon witnessing the person whom she once respected commit such a shameless action, she could no longer hold herself back.

Weng!

The sword flew across the sky, and her movement was so incredibly light and graceful that the scene resembled a painting.

Battle Technique [Sunset Swordsmanship]! As though rapidly flowing river beneath the setting sun, her movements were fluid!

"Heh!"

With his arms locked firmly in place, Lu Xun harrumphed coldly and sent a kick straight toward the sword.

His reaction and the timing could be said to be impeccable. However, he had underestimated Yuan Tao, who was clutching onto him from behind.

Seeing Zheng Yang get injured had triggered him, and he roared furiously.

"Get down here!"

His plump body had become as heavy as a boulder, pulling Lu Xun's rising body down forcefully.

With this fall, not only did Lu Xun's kick miss Zhao Ya's sword, he lost his balance and if things go wrong, he might even be pierced in the heart.

"Ah!"

Not expecting the abrupt change, Lu Xun's eyes narrowed. However, it was too late to do anything.

Hu!

Seeing that things were about to get fatal, a figure suddenly appeared between them and his fingers lightly flicked.

Weng!

A metallic sound resounded and Zhao Ya lost grip over her sword. It flew out and stabbed into the ground not too far away.

"Teacher!"

Upon seeing her sword being blown away, Zhao Ya was about to fly into a rage when she saw the other party's features. She immediately clasped her hands and bowed respectfully.

It was Zhang Xuan.

He could tell that both parties had reached the peak of their anger. If he didn't stop them, things would blow out of proportion.

After disarming Zhao Ya, he walked toward Zheng Yang and infused zhenqi into him. He realized that the latter's injury wasn't severe and that he should be able to recover swiftly under the nourishment of pills. Only then did he heave a sigh of relief and turn toward Yuan Tao, "You should get down as well!"

"Yes!"

Yuan Tao loosened his grip and fell to the floor.

Even though the only thing he did throughout the battle was to hug Lu Xun, he had sustained the most severe injuries out of the five.

If not for the awakening of his Emperor's Bloodline, which grants him a significant boost in his defense, he would have long caved under the barrage of attacks and fainted.

"Teacher...."

After briefly adjusting their breathing, the five dragged their wearied bodies toward Zhang Xuan.

Even though they felt fatigued, their eyes were glowing with excitement.

Even though they didn't think that they have won the duel, the results were unexpectedly good. After all, their opponent was a star teacher, and he ended up being done in good by them. No matter what, they still felt proud of themselves.

They thought that by venting their teacher's frustration and showcasing their growth over the past half a month, they would be able to receive compliments. Yet, Zhang laoshi's expression was extremely dark and flames of anger were burning in his eyes.

"Teacher...."

Upon seeing him in such a state, Zheng Yang and the others were perplexed.

"Do you think that I should compliment you?"

Zhang Xuan glared at them, and it felt as though a storm was brewing.

"We...."

The five of them scratched their heads.

"Since you intentionally hid it from me, I thought that you were practicing some powerful offensive collaboration formation, but tell me, what the hell is this toy?" Zhang Xuan roared furiously, and his face revealed his disappointment.

Is formation not good?

This is considered one of the top offensive collaboration formation in Tianxuan Kingdom, alright?

Upon hearing the reason behind his outrage, everyone was taken aback.

Even taking the entire Tianxuan Kingdom into account, this offensive collaboration formation was one of the top formations. After all, using this formation, a Fighter 5-

dan cultivator and four Fighter 2-dan cultivators were able to rival a Pixue realm pinnacle expert, thus proving the strength of this formation.

Yet, he wasn't happy with the results?

Even calling it a 'toy'?

Lu Xun, who had finally calmed down, felt stifled. Hearing those words, his injuries almost worsened and he nearly spurted a mouthful of blood.

Is there something wrong with you?

This offensive collaboration formation nearly killed me, yet you aren't satisfied?

"Why? You don't agree with what I'm saying? Fine, then I will start explaining from the first move. When Yuan Tao charged toward Lu laoshi, if Zheng Yang was in this position and used the spear art which I taught, the prowess of your primary assault would be boosted by a single fold. Liu Yang, if you had attacked from here while squatting three cun lower, it would be the blind hole of his vision, making it impossible for him to evade your strike. As for Zhao Ya and Wang Ying, are you all sleeping? If you were standing here, do you think he would be able to escape?"

Disregarding everyone's shock, Zhang Xuan flung his sleeves and drew the offensive collaboration formation on the ground and highlighted a few points.

Initially, Lu Xun was doubtful of Zhang Xuan's words. However, after hearing his lecture, his face suddenly turned pale.

The other party's words made perfect sense. If his students arranged themselves according to his positioning and struck at the same moment, even Lu Xun would be unable to dodge all of their attacks. At the very least, he would be struck by three attacks simultaneously.

Just a blow from one of these little fellows was enough for him to spurt blood. He wouldn't be able to withstand three blows from them simultaneously even if he were at his peak condition.

Oblivious to Lu Xun's trembling body, Zhang Xuan continued.

"Next, Yuan Tao grabbing onto Lu laoshi should have been a good opportunity. If Liu

Yang had attacked here, Wang Ying delayed her attack by three breaths, and Zhao Ya didn't hesitate, within the seventh breath, you all would have been able to seal his path of retreat. If so, would you all have gotten injured? Without a single injury, he would have admitted his defeat!"

The more Zhang Xuan spoke, the angrier he became.

These little fellows are truly too toying around too much.

Initially, he thought that they were practicing some kind of formidable formation, so he wasn't too worried. Yet, it turned out to be full of flaws.

What the hell is this!

You call this a formation?

If only you had sought pointers from me beforehand, none of you all would have gotten injured today. Furthermore, you would have been able to completely pummel Lu Xun.

He wouldn't have been able to retaliate at all, needless to say, refuse to admit defeat!

Even more so, none of you would have gotten injured.

"This.... This...."

Hearing the other party's explanation, Lu Xun felt his body turn cold.

Other people may be unable to tell how accurate was Zhang Xuan's pointers, but as a person who had personally experienced the formation, he was aware of how fearsome his words were.

If his students had truly done it that way, the result would be as Zhang Xuan said. None of them would be injured, and his face would be swollen from a one-sided beating.

Can it be that Zhang Xuan understands formations as well?

A battle changes constantly at rapid speeds, yet he is able to see through the flaws in their formation with a single look and make the most accurate adjustments.... Are you for real?

How do you do that?

Lu Xun's trembled in fear.

He thought that those youngsters had complemented each other well in the battle, yet Zhang Xuan could point out so many flaws and problems in their collaboration.

If they were to fill up these gaps, he, despite being a Pixue realm cultivator, would be helpless before them!

In a truly powerful formation, one plus one equals to three or even four.

Yuan Tao was skilled in defense, so he played the role of the sturdiest shield. Zheng Yang was skilled in spearmanship, so he was the sharpest arrow. Zhao Ya was the core of the team, and she used all kinds of means to complement the others. Wang Ying possessed superior movement technique, so she was all around the field. Liu Yang's fists were invincible, so he struck when the opportunity arose....

If by the previous formation, the five people were able to execute the strength of seven or eight, going by Zhang laoshi's modification, they would be able to execute the strength of twenty!

Even a Tongxuan realm primary stage expert would find it hard to stand against such prowess, needless to say, a Pixue realm pinnacle cultivator like him!

Fearsome!

"Incredible! Even though he had merely spoken a few words, he had pointed out the very essence of the formation. Can it be that Zhang laoshi understands formations as well?"

Disbelief reflected in Liu Ling's eyes as he heard Zhang Xuan's pointers to his students.

Formation masters and apothecaries are two of the most esteemed occupations of the Upper Nine Paths. Both occupations require incredibly deep and profound knowledge, and becoming an official apothecary at such an age is already an incredible feat. Yet, he possesses knowledge of formations as well?

"Do you understand all I've said?"

Oblivious to the shock and silence in the surroundings, Zhang Xuan reprimanded his students and scanned their faces.

"Yes!"

The five of them lowered their heads in embarrassment.

This formation originated from Zhao Ya, and it was one of the top formations in Baiyu City. She thought that it was a flawless and powerful formation, so never in her dreams did she think that it had so many loopholes.

However, after Zhang laoshi's guidance and the experience they gained from fighting Lu Xun previously, they had already developed an in-depth understanding of the formation. They should feel much more familiar it if they were to execute it once more.

"It's good that you understand!"

After lecturing them, Zhang Xun slowly walked back with his hands behind his back. "Since you all understand the formation, go back and fight with Lu laoshi once more. He hasn't admitted defeat, right? Beat him until he admits defeat!"

"Ah?"

"Fight again?"

The five students staggered and they nearly spurted blood at Zhang Xun's words.

They thought that they were ruthless, but to think that Zhang laoshi topped them....

"You...."

Lu Xun's felt his vision turning gray.

The heck! So in the end, it turns out that the reason why you ran in here, interrupted the fight, and offered them pointers isn't that you think that they didn't do well enough, but because you want to toy with me....

Lu Xun stood up, and he was about to speak when a panicked voice suddenly echoed from afar.

Master Zhang, please forgive this son of mine on my account!"

Turning around to take a look, he saw Master Zhang walking over.

"Father...."

Upon seeing the father, who usually stayed out of all his affairs, speaking up for him, Lu Xun clenched his fist and his face flushed.

The reason why he left home was to prove to his father that even without him, he can create a place for himself. He didn't expect to be caught by him in such an embarrassing situation.

"You brat, kneel down!"

Looking at him with disappointment, Master Lu Chen pointed toward Zhang Xuan and said, "What are you waiting for? Call him your uncle now!"

Chapter 225

Senior

"Call him uncle?"

At this moment, regardless of whether they were teacher or student, all of them felt strangled.

For Lu Xun to call Zhang Xuan uncle?

Where does this logic come from?

Am I hearing things?

Master Lu Chen was the emperor's tutor, and if Lu Xun were to call him uncle, wouldn't Emperor Shen Zhui have to do the same as well?

Does this make any sense?

Upon thinking of this, everyone turned their gazes toward Emperor Shen Zhui, who was seated at the VIP area. As expected, his complexion seemed awful.

For an emperor, as well as a middle-aged man in his forties, to be considered as a junior to a lad who wasn't even in his twenties yet.... No one can accept such a situation easily.

"Address him as.... uncle?"

Lu Xun was on the verge of tears.

What do you mean by that?

He isn't even as old as me, not to mention, he is just a low-level teacher. Yet, I have to call him uncle?

He felt so stifled that he had an urge to puke blood.

"Why? You can't bring yourself to say it? Master Zhang my peer, and I address him as my brother. How else should you address him if not uncle?"

Master Lu Chen slapped his son's head as he bellowed.

What kind of son did he raise, to dare to pick a fight with his uncle? He truly is tired of living. It is fortunate that Master Zhang is magnanimous, otherwise, he would have to lie in bed for the next few months.

"I...."

After an intense struggle within, Lu Xun still found himself unable to address Zhang Xuan as an uncle. Lu Xun truly felt like crying at this instant.

"You beast...."

Master Lu Chen was so furious that his beard was blown up with a snort. Just as he was about to continue reprimanding his son, Zhang laoshi stopped him.

"Enough, Brother Lu. It's normal for kids to have their times of folly, it's actually nothing much. You just have to teach them slowly in the future. It's not good to beat them up in public like that!"

Zhang Xuan tried to persuade him.

Honestly speaking, he wasn't too bothered by hierarchical protocols.

However, he felt that he should spare Lu Xun face on Master Lu Chen's account.

Ever since his transcendence, Master Lu Chen had provided him with a significant amount of help. Otherwise, with how Lu Xun had provoked him time and time again, he would have long made mincemeat of him.

"Yes, Brother Zhang is right!"

Master Lu Chen nodded his head. He hit his son on his head once more and said, "You beast, hurry up and thank Uncle Zhang for his magnanimity!"

"I...."

Lu Xun was on the verge of going crazy. He turned to look at Zhang Xuan with the urge to pull out his hair.

Brother, your identity sure changed quickly!

It's normal for 'kids' to have their times of folly....

Who the heck are you saying is a kid?

You're younger than me, yet you said those words so naturally. Where did your confidence come from....

He felt incredibly dismal and frustrated, but before his father, he didn't dare to say anything.

On the other hand, someone had already fainted from the sight.

It was his good friend, Wang Chao.

Zhang laoshi was half a teacher to Wang Chong, which means.... even his father was a junior.

If so, in terms of standing, he had to call Zheng Yang and the others as uncles....

"Uncle.... Zhang!"

After a long moment of hesitation, Lu Xun spat through gritted teeth. Taking a deep breath, a cold glint flashed across his eyes as he said, "You might have triumphed over me in the Teacher Evaluation, but it is impossible for you to become an apprentice of the three master teachers!"

It was all because of this fellow that he had embarrassed himself so greatly today. Even though he had addressed the other party as Uncle Zhang under his father's pressure, he didn't actually feel the slightest bit of respect for him.

"Oh? Why would my dear nephew say such words?" Zhang Xuan looked at him doubtfully.

"You...."

Knowing the other party had intentionally addressed him as 'dear nephew', Lu Xun felt his rage burst forth and he nearly spurted a mouthful of blood. His entire body swayed and he spat through gritted teeth, "To become an assistant master teacher, one has to be a certified star teacher or high-level teacher of the Teacher Guild. However, as a low-level teacher, you do not meet the requisites!"

A teacher can be divided into low-level teachers, high-level teachers, and star teachers.

Those who manage to become an assistant master teacher are mostly star teachers, and even at the very least, high-level teachers. A mere low-level teacher doesn't meet the requirements.

So what if the three master teachers have a high evaluation of you?

As master teachers, they are expected to follow the rules.

"This...."

Zhang Xuan was stunned.

His previous self had always been a low-level teacher, and after his reincarnation, due to his brief time here, he hadn't had sufficient time to take the high-level teacher examination. It seemed that he had to look for an opportunity to take the examination, otherwise, in his journey to become a master teacher, his status would become the greatest limiting factor.

As the most prestigious occupation in the world, one can only become a master teacher by taking themselves forward step by step, with honesty. If someone were to find out that one had taken shortcuts, being humiliated would just a small affair, he could potentially lose all of the honor he had built up over the years.

"Zhang laoshi, we meet once again!"

He was thinking about taking the examination when a familiar voice sounded. Turning around to take a look, he saw Elder Mo from the Teacher Guild. Unknowingly, he had walked over.

"Ah, so it's Elder Mo!"

Zhang Xuan had a good impression of this Elder Mo.

Upon realizing his mistake, he didn't side with his friends and instead proceeded over the matter with utmost fairness. If not for him, it would have been impossible for him to stand up against Shang Chen and Shang Bin at the Enlightenment Will Trial.

"Zhang laoshi, I'm truly sorry that a black sheep like Shang Chen had appeared among the teachers and brought you a ton of troubles. After I left that day, I reported the matter to the headquarter and a verdict has just been issued. We've kept you waiting for long!"

Elder Mo bowed.

"Oh? There's a verdict? Good!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Back then, in the Enlightenment Will Trial, Elder Mo had only temporarily suspended Shang Chen's duties as the head of Education Bureau and Shang Bin laoshi's license. A conclusive verdict wasn't passed out then.

Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that they weren't going to carry out any punishments, but to think that the issue had been reported up to the headquarters.

The Teacher Guild headquarter is unimaginably far from Tianxuan Kingdom. Even with the quickest communication tool, reporting the matter to a Conferred Kingdom and receiving a reply through warp portals will take at least half a month.

"I'll be announcing the verdict from the headquarters now!"

Elder Mo nodded his head, retrieved a scroll from his pocket, and unrolled it.

Huala!

A light gushed from the dueling ring straight into the heavens, illuminating all four directions.

"It's the Teacher Guild's [Guild Letter]!"

"Guild Letter? What's that?"

"An Emperor uses his imperial edict to relay his command and summons.... The

Teacher Guild, as one of the strongest power in the entire continent, has a similar object as well, and it is known as the Guild Letter! Usually, it is used to announce punishments toward teachers who flout rules or relay command from the elders of the guild. Once announced, the announcement will automatically be recorded in the books of the Teacher Guild. Thus, these records can be checked easily from any branch!"

"To have allowed the Tianxuan Kingdom's branch to use the Guild Letter, this shows how important they valued the matter!"

"Naturally! Intentional oppression of a genius who can potentially become a master teacher, it would be strange if the guild doesn't regard this matter seriously."

"Indeed. Shang Chen truly picked on the wrong person, he deserved it!"

....

Upon seeing the object, every single teacher, who was aware of the significance of the letter, was shocked greatly.

The Guild Letter of the Teacher Guild was rarely used, and for it to be used on this occasion showed how importantly they regarded this affair.

Hualala!

The moment the Guild Letter opened, all of the teachers, students, and even the three master teachers, stood up respectfully.

"Tianxuan Kingdom, Hongtian Academy's Teacher Shang Chen, as the head of the Education Bureau, made use of his position to oppress another teacher, flouting the commandments of the guild. Thus, he will be stripped of his teaching license, permanently!"

Amidst the brilliant light, an authoritative voice sounded.

Putong!

Previously sitting amidst the crowd, Elder Shang Chen's face darkened and he fell to the floor in despair.

He had merely wanted to help his grandson vent his resentment, and he never expected for the matter to blow out of proportions.

Being stripped of his teaching license meant that his identity and standing was completely destroyed. It was no different from being demoted from a noble to a peasant.

"Tianxuan Kingdom, Hongtian Academy's Teacher Shang Bin failed to unite his colleagues and act as a good role model. Thus, he will be stripped of his teaching license for three years. Teacher Cao Xiong incited the affair due to his envy. Thus, he will be permanently stripped of his teaching license, and no academy is to hire him!"

After which, the voice announced Shang Bin and Cao Xiong's punishments as well.

Shang Bin, having been stripped of his teaching license for three years, meant that he would be unable to practice teaching for three years.

At the very least, this meant that he could nevertheless return to the academy in three years' time. On the other hand, his grandfather, Shang Chen, and Cao Xiong had no such chance to redeem themselves.

This was especially for Cao Xiong. For the academies to be banned from hiring him meant that he wasn't allowed to even serve as a cleaner in there. If a school were to be found to infringe on the ruling, the entire academy would be punished by the guild.

"Tianxuan Kingdom, Hongtian Academy Teacher Zhang Xuan, as an earnest person, had tolerated humiliation in consideration for the reputation of the academy. At the same time, he has shown achievements in guiding others, making him a role model for teachers. Thus, he is promoted to a star teacher."

Hu!

The voice from the Guild Letter came to an end and the brilliance gradually faded from sight.

"So, does this mean that I'm now a star teacher?"

Zhang Xuan blinked his eyes.

He thought that he would need to take the high-level teacher examination and think

of a way to rise through the ranks, but from the looks of it, there was no need for it. A single paper from the Teacher Guild had settled his problem.

"Zhang laoshi, congratulations!"

Stroking his beard, Elder Mo smiled at Zhang Xuan.

"Thank you Elder Mo for going through such trouble!" Zhang Xuan bowed.

He knew that Elder Mo must have contributed greatly to the verdict, and he was grateful to him for that.

"You're being too polite. I'm only here to announce the guild's verdict, so I won't be bothering you any further. Farewell!" After which, he clasped his hands and left with a smile.

His departure was followed by a moment of silence. Everyone turned to look at Lu Xun immediately.

Didn't you just say that the other party isn't qualified?

Right afterward, Elder Mo appeared and announced the Teacher Guild's verdict of promoting Zhang laoshi to a star teacher. This face slap.... Honestly, everyone can feel the sting.

As expected, Lu Xun's face turned white, and it seemed like he was considering whether he should commit suicide on the spot.

"Master Zhang, I have spoilt my son. I hope that you can be magnanimous and...."

Witnessing the situation, Master Lu Chen shook his head. Initially, he hadn't intended to interfere in this matter, but he could not resist and eventually clasped his hands toward Zhang Xuan.

"Master Lu Chen, what are you saying...." Zhang Xuan smiled. "His rationality is just overwhelmed by his desire to become a master teacher's apprentice, I won't hold a grudge against him for that!"

"Thank you!" Seeing that Zhang Xuan had no intentions on pursuing the matter, Lu Chen bowed in gratitude.

"There's no need for you to be so courteous." "And right!" Zhang Xuan turned to look at the three master teachers. "Liu shi, Zhuang shi, Zheng shi, even though Lu Xun's recent performance isn't ideal, his ability as a teacher is indeed outstanding. You should consider him if you wish to accept an apprentice!"

"You...."

Lu Xun was feeling so stifled when he heard Zhang Xuan's words. His face immediately reddened and his eyes widened in shock.

The reason why he had been competing with Zhang Xuan was for the opportunity to become an apprentice of the three master teachers. Yet.... Even though Zhang laoshi won the battle, why was he himself benefiting instead....

Also, what's with your attitude?

The other party is a master teacher! Speaking with such a tone, aren't you afraid of being beaten to death?

Before he could recover from his shock, the three master teachers stepped forward and clasped their hands before Zhang Xuan.

"Senior!"

Chapter 226

A Godlike Man

"Se.... Senior?"

"Did Liu shi and the others just call Zhang Xuan their senior?"

"He isn't even twenty. On the other hand, the three master teachers are at minimum sixty or seventy. Where is the logic...."

"I've no idea, but.... from the looks of it, the three master teachers don't seem to be feigning anything. Can Zhang laoshi truly be that incredible?"

It was as though the crowd had been struck by lightning.

Shocks came like waves today, crashing down on them one after another. They felt as though they were unable to keep up anymore and their heart had reached their limits.

"Is.... is he a senior to Liu shi and his company? Can it be...."

Narrowing his eyes, Emperor Shen Zhui seemed to have thought of something as he shuddered.

As the three master teachers had been residing in the palace, he had come into contact with them frequently and knew of their intentions.

They had been trying to acknowledge Yang Xuan as their teacher and given how they were addressing Zhang Xuan as their senior now, no matter how foolish he was, it was impossible for him to not understand what was going on.

"Zhang Xuan laoshi is.... Yang shi's student. Furthermore, he is a.... direct disciple!"

His breathing quickened.

Yang shi was able to help even the dying Shen Hong reach Zongshi realm, showing the incredible capabilities he possessed. According to Liu shi and the others' conjecture,

he was likely to be at minimum a 3-star master teacher.

Such incredible figures often come and go as they please. It was completely possible for him to vanish into thin air within a few days' time.

But if Zhang Xuan was his direct disciple, it would make things much easier. He could make use of Zhang Xuan as a bridge to tie Yang shi to Tianxuan Kingdom.

Even if he were to be unable to bind such a superpower, Yang shi and the others would also find it hard to reject him, given that their senior, Zhang Xuan, hails from Tianxuan Kingdom.

If so, it is only a matter of time before the kingdom rises through the ranks!

If he had thought previously that being a rank less senior than Zhang Xuan was embarrassing, right now, his eyes were glowing and he regarded it as an honor.

Given that Zhang Xuan had managed to acknowledge Yang Xuan as his teacher, it was just a matter of time before he becomes a master teacher. Putting aside calling him uncle, even calling him grandpa would be nothing much.

As the sovereign of a country, he shouldered the responsibility over the entire kingdom in his hands. He had long learned to weigh matters in terms of cost and benefits. The so-called identity, seniority and such were only mere methods of address to him.

Besides, Liu shi and the others were considered as peers with his grandfather, Shen Hong. Given that Zhang Xuan was their senior, he was lucky to be able to get off with addressing Zhang Xuan as his uncle.

"S.... S.... Senior? The three master teachers' senior?"

While everyone was dumbfounded, Lu Xun stuttered in astonishment.

The reason why he was so against Zhang laoshi previous was that he was vying with him for the opportunity to come under the three master teachers' apprenticeship. Yet.... Not only was the other party unbothered, he actually turned out to be a senior to the three master teachers....

In an instant, he felt as though he had been a clown.

After such a huge farce, it emerged that the other party didn't care for what he had valued so highly. Just by revealing his identity, he could easily destroy him.

Grandmaster painter, an expert at the Way of Tea, official apothecary (Given the number of apothecaries that had appeared in the academy, Wang Chao and him immediately knew of Zhang Xuan's identity as an apothecary), the brother of his father, senior of the three master teachers....

Just any single one of those identities was sufficiently imposing, but at this moment, it was all gathered on a seemingly unimpressive teacher.... Shivering violently, he felt lost.

He had always thought that he was a genius, and even without his father's help, he could make a name for himself. But now, he realized that his so-called talents meant nothing in comparison to the other party.

Honestly speaking.... This blow had caused him to doubt the purpose of life itself!

He was feeling completely loss when he heard Liu shi's voice echo by his ears.

"Lu laoshi is indeed a rare talent. From back then, I had heard of his reputation in Beiwu Kingdom and the reason why I came here was to welcome him as my apprentice. Since senior has spoken on his behalf.... Lu Xun. are you willing to become my apprentice?"

Liu Ling looked at Lu Xun with a smile.

Even if he was unable to accept Zhang Xuan as his apprentice, the trip would also have been worth it if he was able to recruit Lu Xun. Besides, his senior clearly intended to resolve the grudge, and he was glad to give him a hand.

"I'm willing...."

Awakening from his daze, Lu Xun's body froze in agitation.

All of his hard work was for this. He thought that he would be doomed after losing the Teacher Evaluation, and never in his dreams did he expect that his wish would be fulfilled so abruptly.

"Yes.... Zhang Xuan, oh, no, Uncle Zhang.... Teacher!"

Even though Liu shi had said it in that manner, Lu Xun knew that his reputation only played a minor part. More importantly, it was due to Zhang laoshi's recommendation.

Despite me treating him like that, he was willing to recommend me to Liu shi!

What is this magnanimity?

Clenching his fists tightly, Lu Xun's eyes turned red.

"This is the attitude that a teacher should have. Xun-er, you must learn from Master Zhang!"

By the side, Lu Chen, who had witnessed the entire scene, commented.

He had heard the entire matter from Huang Yu, and as such, he knew how much trouble this unfilial son of his had brought to Zhang Xuan. Yet, the other party didn't say a word of criticism. On the other hand, he even helped him to become a master teacher's apprentice. Just his magnanimity showed that he was no ordinary person.

"Yes!" Lu Xun nodded his head.

Only at this moment did he realize how ridiculous his actions had been.

While he was still thinking about how he should become an apprentice of the three master teachers, his rival had already become their senior. While he was thinking about becoming an official painter, the other party was already a grandmaster. While he was thinking about breaking through Pixue realm, the other party was already at Tongxuan realm pinnacle....

That was the distance between them.

"Zhang laoshi, I was foolish in the past and have offended you on multiple occasions. Please forgive me!"

"It's alright as long as you are willing to change! I hope that you will learn properly under Liu shi's guidance in future and quickly become a true master teacher!" Seeing how the other party was willing to let bygones be bygones, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

In actual fact, he didn't hold much resentment toward this Lu Xun.

Based on the memories belonging to his previous self, this fellow had taught numerous incredible students ever since entering the academy. He had practically no bad track records, and it was mainly due to his competitive nature and his desire to surpass his incredible father that he committed so many mistakes.

"Yes!" Lu Xun nodded his head earnestly. Then, he turned to Liu Ling and asked, "Liu shi, may I beseech you on a matter?"

"Feel free to speak!"

Liu shi said as he stroked his beard.

Seeing that Lu Xun was sincere in wanting to turn over a new leaf, he felt delighted as well.

"In order for me to win this battle, my students had consumed [Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill] and there are likely to be heavy and detrimental side effects. I hope that Liu shi can resolve this issue."

Lu Xun knelt down.

"Teacher...."

Witnessing the situation, Zhu Hong and the others clenched their fists tightly and their eyes turned red.

With the matter exposed, Lu laoshi's reputation would definitely be affected greatly. Even so, for their future, he was willing to reveal it all in public. Just his consideration for his student itself was worthy of awe.

Mo Xiao, who had thought of acknowledging Zhang Xuan as his teacher previously, upon seeing Lu laoshi's actions, felt touched. After contemplating over the matter for awhile, he glanced at Lu Xun once more and made up his mind with a new resolve.

While incredible teachers got to chose their students, talented students were also qualified to choose their own teachers.

The reason why he wanted to acknowledge Zhang Xuan was because Lu laoshi's recent actions and performance were disappointing. However, upon seeing this, he realized that the formidable Lu laoshi of the past, the number star teacher of Hongtian

Academy, was back.

Only with a big heart can one surpass all odds.

At that instant, the intention to come under Zhang Xuan's tutelage disappeared.

"Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill? That is one of the forbidden medicine which forcefully raises one's cultivation. Even though it can induce a rapid rise in cultivation, the remanant toxins of the pill will sink into one's meridians, causing one's cultivation speed to become increasingly slower. This will affect their future achievements! To have had them consume these things was equivalent to ruining the future of these kids.... Lu Xun, you are truly foolish!"

Taken aback by Lu Xun's words, Liu Ling shook his head.

"Yes, I know that I was reckless. Liu shi, I beg of you to help them!"

Lu Xun pleaded earnestly.

He also knew the aftereffects of consuming the pill, but the humiliation he felt yesterday had blinded his judgment. His desire to win in this Teacher Evaluation had caused him to commit the mistake in a moment of folly.

"Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill is a pill which forcefully drags out one's potential by tapping into his lifeforce. My skills are still insufficient to treat such conditions!"

Liu Ling sighed.

If the trauma from such medicine could be solved that easily, everyone would have bought one to hasten the growth of their cultivation.

It was because there was no way to solve the trauma that it became a forbidden pill.

Even as a master teacher, Liu Ling was helpless before the matter.

"You cannot treat it?"

Lu Xun's face turned pale.

He thought that he could solve their problem once he became a master teacher, but

now, it seemed that his thinking was too naive.

If even Liu shi was incapable of treating the trauma, didn't it mean that for his own selfish motive, he had ruined the lives of several students?

Intense self-reproach struck at Lu Xun's conscience.

"All of you consumed the Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill?"

Zheng Yang heard the conversation clearly from the side. He rushed to the side of his good buddy hurriedly and questioned him anxiously.

"Yes!" Mo Xiao nodded his head.

"You...." Zheng Yang clenched his fists rightly.

It was true that consuming the Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill would help one to achieve a breakthrough in their cultivation within a short period of time, but climbing to greater heights in future would become immensely difficult.

It was no different from pulling a seedling for it to grow faster.

Having grown up with Mo Xiao, he knew that his buddy was as obsessed over strength as him. The other party would definitely be unable to bear the burden of watching his own cultivation slow down, and eventually fall behind the others.

"Zhang laoshi, I beg of you, please save Mo Xiao!"

Gritting his teeth, Zheng Yang ran to Zhang Xuan and knelt down.

In his mind, Zhang laoshi was omnipotent. Even if Liu shi was helpless before the matter, Zhang laoshi would definitely be able to do the impossible.

"Save him?"

Hearing the plea of his student, Zhang Xuan nodded his head, "Alright!"

Back then, during the Teacher Evaluation, when Mo Xiao and the others executed their battle techniques, he was able to immediately identify their problems. The trauma left by the Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill is actually toxin that the medicine leaves in

one's body. While 3-star or even 4-star master teachers would be helpless before the matter, Zhang Xuan possessed the ability to treat them.

The Heaven's Path zhenqi was clear and pure as though water. Regardless of how incredible those toxins were, by infusing his zhenqi within, Zhang Xuan would be able to easily flush them out.

He was even able to suppress a seemingly sentient poison aura who was able to escape his assault, what challenge can mere pill toxins pose?

"You can save them?"

Hearing the other party agree to it so readily, Liu shi and the others were taken aback.

Without explaining anything, Zhang Xuan had Mo Xiao come over. Grabbing his hands, he sent a surge of zhenqi into the other party's meridians. Soon, the toxins were all expelled.

Sensing the change in his body, Mo Xiao was so agitated that his body trembled.

After consuming the pill, he clearly felt something restraining his body from within, but at this instant, the inhibition disappeared completely. The shackles that limited his cultivation had disappeared completely.

"Thank you, Zhang laoshi for treating me!"

Knowing that the side effect of the Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill had been resolved, Mo Xiao immediately knelt to the ground in gratitude.

"It's treated already?"

Liu Ling could not believe what had happened. He walked over hurriedly and sent a surge of zhenqi into Mo Xiao's body. After taking a look within, his eyes widened, "It's.... It's true!"

Zhang laoshi had so casually resolved something, which he was helpless about, right before his eyes....

What is that amazing capability?

It is no wonder that he was able to catch Yang shi's eyes and become their senior. His means are simply too incredible!

Watching the sight, Lu Xun knelt before Zhang Xuan and pleaded, "Uncle Zhang, I beg of you to treat the others as well!"

This time, he had called out 'Uncle Zhang' willingly and sincerely.

"Un!"

It wouldn't take much of his effort to treat these few people. Zhang Xuan nodded his head and soon, the traumas of Lu Xun's five students were completely resolved.

The only hassle that emerged was with Zhu Hong. As he hadn't fought at all, there wasn't any book compiled on him. Thus, Zhang Xuan had to have him execute a battle technique before he was able to pinpoint the locations of the toxins.

Looking at the glowing faces of his students, Lu Xun felt truly impressed by Zhang laoshi.

In the world, there exists a kind of person who, even though you two started on the same footing, end up on completely different levels!

They are beings which one can only look up to, with no hope of catching up with.

Clearly, Zhang laoshi is such a.... godlike person!

Lu Xun was completely impressed with the other party and had decided to set him as his ultimate goal when he saw this godlike person looking at him with a wide grin.

"Um.... Lu laoshi, do you still have any more of these Insane Demon Breakthrough Pill? Or.... Maybe you can tell me where you bought it? Can you buy a few for me? If it can raise one's cultivation by an entire realm so quickly, will eating more of it allow one's cultivation to soar several realms at once?"

"...." Lu Xun.

"...." Liu Ling and the others.

Chapter 227

State of Insight

Of course, Zhang Xuan knew that it was impossible.

As an apothecary, he knew that no matter how incredible a medicine was, a person would gradually gain increasing immunity to it the more they consume, needless to say, pills that raises one's cultivation.

After treating their traumas and resolving the grudge between him and Lu Xun, he was finally done with everything here. Just as the teacher-in-charge was about to announce the start of the Freshmen Tournament, countless students rushed to the stage suddenly, their eyes reddened with agitation. They stared at Zhang Xuan fervently, as if they were voracious wolves looking at their prey.

"Zhang laoshi, I hope to come under your tutelage. Will you accept me as your student?"

"I beg of you, please accept me. Not only am I talented, I can help you pack your bed and do your housework...."

"Actually, I've always revered you. Even if I can't become your student, I don't mind just listening in to your classes...."

"Teacher, my clan is rich. As long as you accept me as your student, money isn't a problem!"

"Money money, money your head! Scram, do you think that Zhang laoshi is a materialistic person? But Zhang laoshi, if you really want.... My clan is also rich, so please accept me as your student...."

His incredible performance in the Teacher Evaluation, as well as his ability to solve a problem which stumped the three master teachers, had sent all of the students here into a frenzy. They could no longer hold themselves back and charged forward in an attempt to acknowledge him as their teacher.

In an instant, an uproar broke out in the dueling ring.

All those doubts that they carried for Zhang laoshi had disappeared without a trace. Countless students pushed one another to get nearer to Zhang laoshi, afraid that to miss this opportunity.

There were even a few who felt so regretful that they wanted to commit suicide. They felt that if they hadn't been so blind back then to listen to all sorts of rumors, they would have already become Zhang laoshi's students.

If they had acknowledged him at the very start of the school term, the ones who had shone on the stage wouldn't have been Zheng Yang and the others, but them!

One has to know that Zheng Yang and the others were far from being at the top of the batch, and Yuan Tao was the very last in the cohort.

But at this moment, even Yuan Tao was able to force Lu laoshi back with his charge. The scene of how he forcefully restrained Lu laoshi was still fresh in their mind, and the thought of it agitated them.

From a student, who had barely made it into the academy, to become an expert who can threaten even a Pixue realm expert within half a month.... If they hadn't witnessed it personally, they would have never thought this to be possible.

"This...." Zhang Xuan was astounded as well.

Clearly, he didn't expect that his actions would cause such a stir.

"Teacher.... has finally regained his prestige after that all he has gone through!"

Upon realizing what was happening, Zhao Ya and the others clenched their fists tightly.

Ever since Lu Xun challenged Zhang laoshi, they had been suffocated with anger and indignation. These emotions motivated them to work hard to bring honor and glory to their teacher, and now.... They have finally done it!

Zhang laoshi's brilliance was finally being recognized.

A special pride welled up within them.

At that moment, it was as if they wanted to shout to the whole world proudly....

Look, this is my teacher....

Zhang Xuan!

....

"I already have five students and I don't intend to accept any other students anytime soon. However, given how passionate all of you appear to be, how about this, I can conduct a lecture on the fundamentals of cultivation, and perhaps, it would be useful!"

Knowing that he will die of fatigue if he were to accept so many students, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before coming up with an idea.

Just these five students had caused him to almost go bankrupt. If he were to accept so many students at once.... He probably wouldn't even have the money to eat!

"Zhang laoshi is not accepting any students?"

"But listening to his lecture is good as well...."

Finding out that Zhang Xuan wasn't intending to accept any students, everyone felt disappointed initially. However, upon hearing that Zhang Xuan would conduct a lecture for them, the glow on their faces returned.

With the ability to induce such a rapid growth in Zheng Yang and the others, how can his lesson be anything ordinary?

"This lecture on the fundamentals of cultivation will be held tomorrow afternoon, the location right here. Those who wish to attend can come earlier, but for today, let's proceed with the Freshmen Tournament!"

After addressing and calming down the crowd, Zhang Xuan left the dueling ring.

If he doesn't leave now, he might really end up eaten by those frenzied students.

Besides, the Freshmen Tournament should be the main show of the day. The Teacher Evaluation can only be considered as an appetizer, and he shouldn't steal the spotlight from the event.

Right after he returned back to his classroom, the three master teachers followed in swiftly.

"Senior!"

The three of them clasped their hands.

"Un! Please be seated. Actually, I have something that I'll need to trouble you with!" Zhang Xuan smiled.

"You're Yang shi's direct disciple while we're only his students. As our senior, please feel free to give us instructions. It's no trouble at all...."

Liu Ling smiled awkwardly.

Even as fellow students, a hierarchy exists. Direct disciples possess the highest standing, and other students have to address them as 'senior' regardless of their cultivation realm or age.

As juniors, it was only right for them to obey the commands of their seniors.

"It's like that!" Seeing them agree to the matter so readily, Zhang Xuan nodded his head and continued. "You know that Yang shi likes to travel about and rarely gets involved with worldly affairs. Even though he has accepted me as his direct disciple, he had only instructed me to study on my own and he hadn't officialized my identity in the records.... Thus, I might need to trouble you three for my master teacher examination!"

The reason why he accepted them as his students was for this. Since it wasn't convenient for 'Yang shi' to bring the matter up, Zhang Xuan could only bring it up himself.

"Oh, I was thinking what kind of matter it was. This isn't difficult." Liu Ling smiled. "In order to take the master teacher examination, one has to be at least an assistant master teacher. Since Yang shi has decided to retreat from the spotlight and it isn't suitable for him to reveal his identity, the three of us can do it in his place."

As he spoke, he flicked his wrist, retrieved a jade token, and passed it to Zhang Xuan.

"This is an identity jade token with our aura in it. As long as you carry it with you, you

will be recognized as an assistant master teacher whom we have tested and acknowledged. You just have to drip a drop of blood on it in order to claim ownership, and thereafter, no matter which Master Teacher Pavilion you go to, you will be identified as our apprentice, thus giving you the qualifications to take the master teacher examination."

"Oh? This simple?"

Casually accepting the jade token, Zhang Xuan found the situation unbelievable.

He had always thought that it would be a complicated process, but to think that it would actually be so easy.

"It isn't difficult to become an assistant master teacher. As long as a master teacher recognizes you, all star teachers and high-level teachers are qualified to become an assistant master teacher. The true difficulty lies in meeting the prerequisites to become eligible for the master teacher examination!" Liu Ling said.

"Oh? Then.... what are these prerequisites?"

After claiming ownership of the token, Zhang Xuan kept the token and asked.

There were no master teachers in Tianxuan Kingdom and there weren't any records of it in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault either. Even though he had been impersonating a master teacher these few days, he had no idea what the prerequisites were, where he could undergo the examination and other such basic knowledge.

"There are some external and internal conditions one had to meet to be eligible for the master teacher examination. The external conditions are a recommendation from a master teacher, the identity of an assistant master teacher, and at least one supporting occupation!"

Liu Ling explained.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

He had heard all of these before.

"As for the internal conditions, there are two of them!" Liu Ling continued on. "The conditions are reaching the State of Insight of the Heart of Tranquil Water and

Tongxuan realm cultivation!"

"State of Insight?" Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

He knew that the Will of Mind 2-dan was Heart of Tranquil Water, but he had never heard of the term 'State of Insight'.

Liu Ling explained, "The Will of Mind is something all cultivators and professionals in all occupations have to temper continuously. The Heart of Tranquil Water is a terminology to refer to the level where one is able to control their mind, allowing them to focus their entire attention on a single task without any influence from external factors."

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Liu Ling's words were true. It was precisely because Apothecary Chen Xiao, Apothecary Meng Yan and the others had not reached such a level that their negative emotions affected the Tranquil Heart Pill they forged, causing their pills to lose its original functions.

"There are two classifications to the Heart of Tranquil Water. One relates more to master teachers whereas the other is relevant to normal cultivators and professionals."

"The reason why there are two different classifications is simple. The Heart of Tranquil Water that a master teacher has to achieve is different from what other occupations require. This is also the reason why master teachers are so highly respected."

"The other professionals and cultivators merely have to reach the level of complete tranquility, such that they are released from influence by any external or internal factors. On the other hand, the Heart of Tranquil Water concerning a master teacher is about being able to peer into the essence and discerning truth from false!"

"Discern truth from false, peer into the very essence?"

"Indeed. If you find that hard to understand, let me put it this way. The Heart of Tranquil Water that ordinary cultivators reach is known as the 'State of One'. It is sufficient for them as long as they are able to pour all of their attention into one matter without being distracted by any other factors. On the other hand, the Heart of Tranquil

Water relating to master teachers is known as the 'State of Insight'. It grants one the ability to peer into the order of a matter and determine the crux of a problem."

"That's to say, even though they are both at Heart of Tranquil Water, the state which a master teacher reaches is different from that of ordinary humans. Only those who possess the State of Insight of Heart of Tranquil Water are eligible to take the master teacher examination. This is also why apothecary teachers, tea master teachers, formation master teachers, smithing teachers and such aren't master teachers."

With a supporting occupation, one is eligible to take the master teacher examination. Zhang Xuan had been thinking that it was odd that Elder Tian didn't take the master teacher examination even though he was a tea master teacher in Beiwu Academy. It turned out that the crux of the problem laid here.

Without the State of Insight, one is ineligible.

"Then.... How should one cultivate to reach the State of Insight of the Heart of Tranquil Water?" Understanding the reason behind it, Zhang Xuan asked.

"How to reach?" Liu Ling, Zhuang Xian, and Zheng Fei glanced at one another before smiling. "There's no way for one to cultivate that state, it's a talent! Those who possess the potential to become a master teacher, upon reaching Heart of Tranquil Water, would reach the State of Insight, granting them the ability to discern truth from false!"

"This is similar to how apothecaries must have the physical constitution of wood element. Without talent, no matter how hard one cultivates, it is impossible to become a master teacher! To use an analogy, no matter how incredible a man is, it is impossible to him to bear children. Without talent, no matter how hard one trains, it will be in vain!"

"Upon reaching the Heart of Tranquil Water.... one would be able to discern truth from false?" Gedeng, Zhang Xuan's heart skipped a beat.

He had already reached the Heart of Tranquil Water, but why hadn't he gained such an ability?

"How does one differentiate between State of Insight and State of One?"

"Taking the simplest example, when watching a person execute a battle technique, a person who has reached State of Insight would be able to instinctively analyze the

logic behind the moves, arrange them, and infer the best way to cultivate to achieve the optimal effects. On the other hand, a person in the State of One is unable to do the same."

Liu Ling continued, "The reason why master teachers often choose star teachers to become their apprentice is because it is likely that they possess such a talent, for them to have students following them so willingly."

"Instinctively analyze the logic behind battle techniques?"

Zhang Xuan's body shuddered.

The heck, he has long attained the Heart of Tranquil Water, but why hadn't he experienced such an occurrence?

Could it be that.... he doesn't have the talent to become a master teacher?

If that is the case, he is doomed.

Chapter 228

Shouldn't Toy with Someone Like That

Not too long after his reincarnation, after fusing the soul of his previous self with his own, Zhang Xuan had reached the Heart of Tranquil Water.

All along, he had been depending on the library to look for flaws to determine the crux of the problem. He had never paid attention to his ability to discern truth from fiction. Could it be that... his Heart of Tranquil Water wasn't State of Insight?

If it wasn't the State of Insight, he would be unable to take the master teacher examination. If so, what was the use of having such a powerful library?

This couldn't be true...

Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears.

But soon, he soon thought of another possibility.

Since the library would compile a book whenever he saw a battle technique, he would refer to it instinctively. With such a cheat code, no one would bother analyzing the logic behind the moves and their orders. Thus, it was still too early to say for sure.

"So... how do you check if a person possesses the State of Insight or State of One?" Zhang Xuan asked upon thinking of this.

"Oh, actually that's simple. I have a [Stone of Insight] here. After holding it and adjusting one's state of mind to reach Heart of Tranquil Water, if numbers appear on it, it means that you possess State of Insight. Otherwise, it means you possess State of One!"

Liu Ling retrieved a green stone. There was a dense congregation of lines on it, making him feel dizzy upon seeing it.

"Of course, there are different levels to State of Insight as well. The higher the number, the more talented one is. If your Soul Depth has reached 3, you are eligible to take the

1-star master teacher examination. Given how Senior has such outstanding results as a teacher and how you caught Yang shi's eyes, you should have already reached 4 or above. This is something that the rest of us are unable to compete with even after we sap our potential dry!"

At this, Liu Ling and the others stared at Zhang Xuan in admiration.

The Soul Depth of one's State of Insight determined the talent of a master teacher. The higher the value, the more one was able to peer into the essence of things, the higher the heights one could reach.

The few of them had barely met the prerequisites for 1-star master teacher. Even though they had been training diligently throughout the years, they had already sapped their potential dry. Even if they reached Zongshi, it was hard to say whether their Soul Depth would reach a level that would allow them to be eligible to take the 2-star master teacher examination.

Given how the youngster before them managed to catch Yang shi's eyes, he likely wielded incredible potential. In their view, his Soul Depth likely exceeded 3. This was precisely the reason why they were willing to call him Senior.

"Can you give me this Stone of Insight?"

"This stone is normally used by master teachers to ascertain one's standards when choosing an apprentice, similar to the Strength Measuring Rock Pillar. As such, I have a few of them here. If Senior wants to use it, feel free to take one!" Liu Ling smiled. "However, given Senior's age, you probably haven't reached Heart of Tranquil Water yet. There's no need for you to panic. You can test it whenever you reach the state!"

"Yeah!" Taking hold of the Stone of Insight, Zhang Xuan lowered his head to take a look at it.

The lines on it were formed naturally. There were no signs of intentional chiseling or such. Somehow, it induced in him the sensation that it was capable of peering into the essence of everything.

"Right, where can I take the master teacher examination?" Keeping hold of the Stone of Insight, Zhang Xuan lifted his head and continued asking.

"The master teacher examination is of course conducted at the Master Teacher

Pavilion. The closest branch to Tianxuan Kingdom is at Tier 1 Tianwu Kingdom. There are 2-star master teachers there and a complete facility to conduct the test. In fact, you could even take the 2-star master teacher examination there."

Liu Ling added, "If Senior reaches Heart of Tranquil Water, you can head there and give it a try. As long as you meet all of the prerequisites, you can register for it."

"Great!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Alright. Senior, if you have any other instructions, feel free to relay them to us. For now, we'll be taking leave!"

After chatting for a while longer, Liu Ling and the others stood up and left.

Seeing them leave, Zhang Xuan flicked his wrist and the Stone of Insight appeared in his palms once more.

"I should test it to see if I possess the State of Insight of Heart of Tranquil Water..."

In this world, the master teachers possessed unparalleled prestige. Becoming one would allow Zhang Xuan to operate much easier, and would also grant space for Zhang Xuan to display the prowess of the Library of Heaven's Path. If he turned out to be lacking talent in that aspect, it would truly be regretful.

Clutching the Stone of Insight with both hands, he adjusted his state of mind and entered the Heart of Tranquil Water. In an instant, all emotions, including his anxiety, disappeared from him.

This was the state that allowed one to rid themselves of their frustration and agitation, allowing one to analyze matters rationally. This was the state that countless cultivators dreamt of.

Just that, to reach such a state, one had to be capable of directing all of their attention onto a single thing. Just by the fact that only the principal of the entire Hongtian Academy had reached such a state showed the difficulty of doing so.

This was the exact reason why Shen Bi Ru nearly fainted from shock when she saw Zhang Xuan reaching this state.

Weng!

Upon reaching the Heart of Tranquil Water, the Stone of Insight in his hands shuddered and numbers slowly floated onto the surface.

Upon seeing that something had appeared on the stone, Zhang Xuan was relieved.

Liu Ling had said that if one only possessed the State of One of the Heart of Tranquil Water, numbers wouldn't appear on the stone. Thus, this meant that he possessed the State of Insight.

It was a huge relief. At least he still wielded the potential to become a master teacher.

Just a while ago, he was still worried about how he wasn't able to see through the logic and order of the battle techniques of others with his own capabilities and that maybe he didn't have such talent. Now, it seemed like he was just overthinking the matter.

No matter what, he was an incredible existence who possessed the Library of Heaven's Path. How could he not even have the potential to become a mere 1-star master teacher?

Heaving a sigh of relief, Zhang Xuan glanced downward to look at the numbers on the Stone of Insight.

If the value reached three, Zhang Xuan would be eligible to take the 1-star master teacher examination. Given his talent, he should be at least 4, 5, or even 6, 7, 8, 9!

Otherwise, it would be unbecoming of his identity.

He thought gleefully as the numbers on the Stone of Insight finally stopped swaying and appeared clearly before him.

Just when he was happily dreaming about taking the master teacher examination and showcasing his overwhelming talent, Zhang Xuan saw the numbers on it. In an instant, his eyeballs nearly popped out of his eyes.

"This... Are you for real?"

Zhang Xuan's face twitched. He was on the verge of tears after seeing the results.

He saw the numbers on the stone—0.1.

You shouldn't toy with someone like that!

According to Liu Ling's words, the average was around 3 or 4. As for the more incredible ones, they reached 5, 6, or even 7. Zhang Xuan thought that even if he wasn't a genius, he should at least reach the borderline for taking the 1-star master teacher examination and obtain a value of '3'. Yet.... 0.1, what the heck is this?

Brother, is it even possible to go any lower than that?

"I don't believe it..."

On the verge of tears, Zhang Xuan placed the Stone of Insight in his hands and tried once more.

A moment later.

Staring at the 0.09 on the stone, Zhang Xuan felt as though he had been slapped square on the face. The corners of his lips rapidly twitched.

The heck, you really gave me a lower value!

He had always thought that he was an unparalleled genius, a genius among geniuses, yet... reality slapped him right in the face!

Taking the master teacher examination with such a low Soul Depth? He would just be mocked!

If he were to really go there now, he would be driven out in the next moment.

"I don't believe it..."

After trying it a few times, Zhang Xuan finally accepted the fact that his Soul Depth was truly that low. Every time he tested it, his Soul Depth would be lowered by 0.01, to the point that... it was only 0.05 now.

"The next time I meet Liu Ling and the others, I have to ask them if there's a technique to increase one's Soul Depth. Otherwise, with such a low Soul Depth, becoming a master teacher would be nothing but a dream!"

Suppressing the urge to pass out, Zhang Xuan consoled himself.

Right now, he could only pray that there was a secret technique to raising one's Soul Depth in the Master Teacher Pavilion. By then, he just had to make use of the Library of Heaven's Path, compile a Heaven's Path manual, and raise his State of Insight value swiftly.

Otherwise, given his current value, he wasn't even qualified to be considered a star teacher.

Just when he was contemplating over what he should do about his low Soul Depth, he heard a knock on the door of the classroom.

"Is Zhang Xuan laoshi in?"

"Emperor Shen Zhui?"

Zhang Xuan recognized the voice and said, "Feel free to enter!"

Creak!

The doors opened and two men walked in.

One of them was Emperor Shen Zhui while the other was a middle-aged man. He looked dashing and if Zhang Xuan looked closely, traces of Zhao Ya's features could be seen in him.

"Zhang laoshi, this Zhao Ya's father, City Lord Zhao Feng. He specially made this trip here to thank you for the care and guidance you had shown to his daughter," Emperor Shen Zhui spoke with a humble tone.

Even though the other party wasn't a master teacher yet, he was Yang shi's direct disciple, the senior of the three master teachers.

Before such a person, even as the sovereign of the country, he didn't dare act impudently.

"Zhao Feng pays respect to Zhang laoshi!" City Lord Zhao Feng stepped forward and greeted Zhang Xuan.

"Since you're Zhao Ya's father, there's no need to be so formal. Take a seat!"

Zhang Xuan welcomed them.

"I've heard from Yao Han how Zhang laoshi has taken care of my daughter for the past several days, and I am very grateful to you for that. I know that given Zhang laoshi's identity and strength, you don't lack money. Thus, I had my men search the treasury and they found an [Enlightenment Jade], so I want to give it to you as a show of gratitude!

After exchanging some small talk, City Lord Zhao Feng handed something to him.

"Enlightenment Jade?" Upon seeing the object the other party handed him, Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

"Enlightenment Jade can be absorbed by a cultivator through touch, similar to spiritual energy. Not only can it restore one's expended Soul Depth, it can also slowly increase it. It is what master teachers use to cultivate their State of Mind and it is extremely valuable. Of the countless jade mines in my Baiyu City, I only managed to find a single one," City Lord Zhao Feng explained.

"It can raise one's Soul Depth?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

His gift truly came at a timely moment.

He was just perplexed over how he could raise his low Soul Depth when City Lord Zhao Feng suddenly sent this Enlightenment Jade his way. This was great!

"Such a valuable object... how can I accept this?" Zhang Xuan felt embarrassed.

It was clear to see how valuable it was, given that there was only one of it in the entire Baiyu City. Its value could not longer be measured using money.

The other party probably spent a great deal of effort trying to find this.

"What is a single jade worth next to the favor Zhang laoshi has bestowed upon my daughter!" City Lord Zhao Feng said respectfully.

Not only did he see through Zhao Ya's unique constitution, he even went all out to awaken it...

The favor was so great that even though the Enlightenment Jade was valuable, it

wasn't enough to repay the gratitude.

"Then, you have my thanks!"

Knowing that the other party sincerely wanted to gift this to him, it would be impolite for him to reject it. Furthermore, he had a use for it, so he nodded his head and accepted it.

"Zhao Ya is my student. Guiding her cultivation so that she can improve faster is part of my responsibilities. This isn't a trade, so I don't need your compensation."

Zhang Xuan continued, "However, I do need the Enlightenment Jade. How about this? Zhao Ya has shown me the cultivation technique of your Baiyu City before, and I'll write down a modified version for you. You can take this as the compensation for the Enlightenment Crystal!"

"Cultivation technique? Modified... version?"

Zhao Feng and Emperor Shen Zhui widened their eyes in astonishment.

Chapter 229

Guiding Zhao Feng

Every single cultivation technique that was passed on had been refined over and over again by the efforts of countless experts.

Putting others aside, the [White Jade Art] had been passed down for no less than three hundred years. Countless ancestors had used this skill as their cultivation technique, and if not for Zhao Ya's incompatibility with the skill as a lady, she would have cultivated this skill as well.

After he started to sense the spiritual energy starting from age four, he had come a long way, becoming the second most influential person in the kingdom now. The White Jade Art had accompanied him for forty years, but he had never experienced any problems with it. Yet this Zhang laoshi who wasn't even in his twenties said that he could modify it?

Seriously?

Modifying and bettering a cultivation technique required an in-depth understanding of cultivation. Only those who had reached Zongshi realm were capable of doing so.

Thus, upon hearing his words, City Lord Zhao Feng and Emperor Shen Zhui were a little doubtful.

Even though Old Ancestor Shen Hong had reached Zongshi realm, he was still unable to refine a cultivation technique that had been passed down for centuries. Yet... Zhang Xuan said he could?

Zhang Xuan saw the doubt in the two of their eyes, but he didn't pay them any heed. Retrieving a paper and a brush, he started writing.

The last time he passed a cultivation technique to Zhao Ya and the others, they also behaved in the same manner. He was already used to it by now.

Not too long after, he finished jotting down a complete cultivation technique.

"This..."

Grabbing the paper, City Lord Zhao Feng lowered his head to take a look. It was indeed the cultivation technique he had been practicing and Zhang laoshi had edited a few portions of it. However, after looking at it, a bizarre expression appeared on his face.

"Is there a problem with it?" Emperor Shen Zhui couldn't help asking.

"Your Majesty, take a look!" Zhao Feng handed the cultivation technique to him.

Casually flipping through it, Shen Zhui was perplexed as well, "I once got the old ancestor to take a look at your cultivation technique, and he commented that it was imposing and powerful. However, this modification erases the strengths of the technique, and there are even some conflicts between several portions... Can this really be cultivated?"

As a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert and the sovereign of a country, Shen Zhui had access to profound cultivation technique manuals, so he was knowledgeable on such matters. At the very least, he was still able to see the strengths and weaknesses of a cultivation technique.

If one were to cultivate according to the formula written, it would cause the zhenqi in their body to go into disarray and clash at several acupoints. At worst, one's cultivation might even go berserk.

"You'll know whether it is useful or not after trying to cultivating it!"

Seeing the doubt in their eyes, Zhang Xuan wasn't angry in the least.

"I believe Zhang laoshi!" After hesitating for a moment, City Lord Zhao nodded his head.

Even though this White Jade Art was modified in an extremely bizarre manner, he trusted Zhang laoshi.

To be able to see through his daughter's Pure Yin Body and induce such a massive improvement in all five of his students in just half a month, Zhang Xuan's discerning ability and his knowledge on cultivation was clearly not something he could compare with.

Upon thinking so, City Lord Zhao memorized the changes, sat on the floor with crossed legs, and started cultivating.

Huhuhu!

As he focused his mind, spiritual energy from the surroundings started surging to him and entered his body through his pores.

The moment he started cultivating, his cultivation realm also became apparent. Tongxuan realm advanced stage!

Gugugugu!

It didn't take long for the healthy glow on City Lord Zhao's face to turn pale. Trembling slightly, sweat streamed down his body.

"This..."

Upon seeing his state, Emperor Shen Zhui swiftly turned to look at Zhang Xuan. "Zhang laoshi, has he cultivated incorrectly? Hastened breathing, unstable state of mind... These are the signs of one's cultivation going berserk!"

Usually when one cultivated, the absorption and refinement of spiritual energy into zhenqi should give a sense of comfort. Yet City Lord Zhao was trembling all over. It seemed as though he was losing control of his strength, and it was threatening to burst out of his body. Clearly, something was wrong.

Unlike Juxi realm and Dantian realm, it wasn't a small affair if a Tongxuan realm cultivator's cultivation went berserk!

Even if one didn't die, at the very least, his cultivation would be destroyed completely.

There wasn't any way of saving someone when it came to that point!

"Don't panic. If City Lord Zhao finds that something is amiss, he'll stop!"

Zhang Xuan simply smiled calmly in response.

"This..."

Zhang Xuan's words rang true. Having cultivated for several decades, he was no longer an amateur who would follow a teacher's words blindly.

If he sensed that something was amiss, he would definitely stop.

Understanding that, Emperor Shen Zhui's worry lightened. Even so, his eyebrows were still furrowed.

He had seen the modifications Zhang laoshi made. The concept behind the modification went against the idea of the White Jade Art, and there were even a few clear conflicts between the two. Was it really fine... cultivating like this?

It must be known that an illogical modification could result in death!

Furthermore, wasn't City Lord Zhao being too rash!

Even though Zhang laoshi had modified it personally, he should have first checked the theories and verified it to be safe. If he cultivated it straightaway in this manner, it was plausible that a problem might occur in his cultivation.

Pu!

As he was thinking about that matter, City Lord Zhao's complexion suddenly turned even more awful, and unable to hold himself back, he spit out a mouthful of blood.

"City Lord Zhao..."

Upon seeing him spit blood, Emperor Shen Zhui immediately stood up to support him, but before he could even move toward the other party, Zhang laoshi spoke up, "Don't be in such a hurry. First look at the blood he has spat out."

Looking down, he saw that the blood on the ground was maroon, unlike from the normal crimson color of blood.

A grim expression appeared on Emperor Shen Zhui's face.

Upon seeing this sight, it was clear that something was wrong.

Just when he was hesitating about whether he should ask Zhang laoshi about this problem, he suddenly saw City Lord Zhao furiously propelling all of the strength

within his body.

Boom!

Along with the sound of a loud explosion, his aura abruptly grew stronger.

"Tongxuan realm... pinnacle? He achieved a breakthrough?"

Emperor Shen Zhui's eyes narrowed.

It seemed that the cultivation technique Zhang laoshi passed to City Lord Zhao was beneficial to him, allowing him to reach Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

Even though it was just a small leap within a realm, being able to accomplish this feat in such a short period of time showed how impressive the modifications Zhang laoshi had made to the cultivation technique were.

"This cultivation technique..."

Thinking that, Emperor Shen Zhui reached over to pick up the cultivation technique written by Zhang Xuan to analyze it. However, Zhang Xuan beat him to it and he casually threw it aside.

Huala!

The several pieces of paper fell into the fireplace not too far away and were reduced to ash.

Emperor Shen Zhui grew even more confused.

As the sovereign of a country, he had always prided himself on his superior wisdom. However, Zhang laoshi's actions today had stumped him. He felt like a fool, utterly unable to understand the rationale behind the other party's actions.

Zhang laoshi said that he was going to modify City Lord Zhao's cultivation technique, but he gave him a clearly flawed modified version instead. In the end, such a cultivation technique allowed City Lord Zhao, who had been stuck at Tongxuan realm advanced stage for numerous years, to break through in a few moments.

Since it was so effective, this cultivation technique should be extremely valuable. Yet...

he threw it in the fireplace, burning it to ash...

'Since you modified the cultivation technique for the other party, your intention should be for him to cultivate it properly in the future. If so, why did you destroy it?'

"As expected of Yang shi's disciple. Incredible..."

In his perplexion, a figure suddenly appeared in his mind.

Yang shi!

Honestly speaking, the actions of Yang shi were even stranger, but they had extraordinary effects. As his direct disciple, Zhang Xuan had inherited this quality of his.

"Thank you, Zhang laoshi!"

As he was thinking that, City Lord Zhao Feng had already completed his cultivation. Looking at Zhang laoshi once more, deep respect and admiration for the other party could be seen on his face.

"You understand it?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Yes, I understand!"

City Lord Zhao nodded his head.

"Good, you may go now!" Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

"OK!" City Lord Zhao nodded his head and backed down. Surprisingly, he didn't mention the burnt secret manual at all.

"This..."

Seeing how peculiarly the two of them were acting and how incomprehensible their words were, Emperor Shen Zhui had no idea what he should start asking about. Thus, he stood up and bid farewell as well. "Zhang laoshi, I'll be taking my leave as well."

After which, he hurriedly left.

Walking out of the classroom, he saw City Lord Zhao looking at Zhang laoshi's classroom with admiring eyes.

"What happened?" Emperor Shen Zhui couldn't help asking.

He was about to die from curiosity over the bizarre actions of the pair.

"Your Majesty saw the cultivation technique Zhang laoshi modified for me. What do you think of it?" City Lord Zhao didn't reply to his question. Instead, he asked one of his own.

"I think that... it's messy. I can't make heads or tails of it..." Emperor Shen Zhui spoke his mind after hesitating for a moment.

Even though he had seen City Lord Zhao achieving a breakthrough through cultivating that technique, he still felt that the contents within were illogical. Something was amiss.

"Indeed, it is indeed a mess. In all honesty, Zhang laoshi did so intentionally..."

City Lord Zhao nodded.

"He intentionally modified it wrong?" Emperor Shen Zhui felt faint. "You knew but you still continued cultivating?"

An incorrect cultivation technique wasn't a joke. It was easy for one's cultivation technique to go berserk if one cultivated in the wrong manner. Yet, even though he knew it was wrong, he went ahead with it. 'What the heck was wrong with these two?

'Furthermore, if it was wrong, how did you reach Tongxuan realm pinnacle?'

What in the world was going on?

Chapter 230

Book of Heaven's Path (First Half)

"Our Zhao Clan's cultivation technique is grand and imposing. Your Majesty should be well aware of this!"

Upon seeing the confusion in the other party's eyes, City Lord Zhao Feng immediately explained the matter to him.

"Indeed!" Emperor Shen Zhui nodded his head.

Actually, many years ago, the Zhao and Shen Clan had worked together to establish the current Tianxuan Kingdom. The Shen Clan had claimed supreme power over the country whereas the Zhao Clan claimed supreme wealth for themselves. As partners, the two clans had maintained an intimate relationship generation after generation, not even hiding their cultivation techniques from one another.

Emperor Shen Zhui had come into contact with Zhao Clan's White Jade Art when he was younger and as such, he was familiar with it. Due to the ferocious might of the technique, it wasn't suitable for a lady like Zhao Ya to cultivate.

City Lord Zhao Ya continued, "Ever since the establishment of Tianxuan Kingdom, my Zhao Clan has been guarding the City of Jade, even naming it 'White Jade.' As such, we have been in contact with jade for generation after generation. Rationally speaking, given the complementary nature between humans and jade, it should enhance one's training speed. Unfortunately, jade has a cold attribute, which clashes with the warm nature of White Jade Art. While carrying a single jade or two isn't a problem, excessive contact could potentially cause a conflict between the energies and damage one's body.

"At first, you wouldn't notice it due to the slow accumulative nature. However, as the conflict continued on for a long period of time, it would slowly leave a unique trauma in your body. It would remain in your bloodline, inherited by one generation after another. This is also the reason why I have been stuck in Tongxuan realm advanced stage for countless years."

The talent of City Lord Zhao Feng back then wasn't inferior to Zhao Ya's. Reaching Tongxuan realm in his twenties, his reputation as a young genius spread far and wide.

However, it was a pity that he found himself at a bottleneck ever since he had reached Tongxuan realm advanced stage. A decade had passed, but he wasn't able to progress at all. Initially, he thought that he had sapped his potential dry. Yet, contrary to all of his expectations, it turned out to be a trauma passed down by his ancestors due to excessive contact with jade.

"Zhang laoshi recognized this problem and intentionally modified the White Jade Art erroneously so as to cause the energies in my body to go on a rampage and expel the cold air from my body. As such, the trauma in my body was expelled, and given the zhenqi which I have accumulated over the numerous years, I was able to achieve a breakthrough and reach Tongxuan realm pinnacle!" Admiration gleamed in Zhao Feng's eyes as he spoke.

To be able to deduce all of this just by looking at his cultivation technique and knowing that he came from Baiyu City, it was clear that Zhang laoshi's understanding of cultivation techniques and cultivation wasn't inferior to a Zongshi.

"Since the trauma is solved, then that cultivation technique..." Emperor Shen Zhui was still puzzled.

"Is Your Majesty curious why Zhang laoshi destroyed the modified cultivation technique?"

City Lord Zhao Feng chuckled, "That cultivation technique is full of errors. The reason why he modified it in that manner is to treat the trauma within my body. Now that it has been removed, if I were to continue cultivating it, my cultivation might really go berserk. Thus, Zhang laoshi destroyed it to indicate that... I can forget about it, and that there is no need for me to continue cultivating the modified version."

"I get it now..." Finally comprehending the situation, Emperor Shen Zhui was astonished by Zhang Xuan's capability.

Even though it sounded simple, accomplishing this feat wasn't easy at all.

As a cultivation technique that had been passed down from several centuries, countless experts had worked on the White Jade Art. Just by modifying some of the zhenqi circulation methods, he was able to completely solve a trauma which had

settled into the Zhao Clan's bloodline for several generations.

Even the three master teachers were probably incapable of such a feat.

"Your Majesty and Father, why are you both here?"

Suddenly, Zhao Ya's voice sounded. Then the several young men and ladies who had the spotlight on them for the day walked over.

"Oh, I am here to pay a visit to Zhang laoshi!" Zhao Feng nodded his head. "Aren't you all participating in the Freshman Tournament as well? Why would you all..."

The duels before were classified under the Teacher Evaluation. To ascertain their ranks among the freshmen, they had to compete in the Freshman Tournament. Thus, Zhao Feng was surprised by their return when the tournament had yet to begin.

"Given our current state, who would want to compete with us?"

Zhao Ya gestured helplessly.

"Ah... that's true!" Zhao Feng and Emperor Shen Zhui smiled wryly.

Regardless of whether it was Zhao Ya, Yuan Tao, or the others, they were able to stand their ground against a Pixue realm expert. They could match up to even the weaker teachers, so which freshman would dare duel with them?

They would probably admit their defeat immediately.

Besides, given their current level of strength, achieving a victory in the Freshman Tournament wouldn't bring glory to them. As a result, they chose to withdraw from it instead.

"Right, Father, have you met with Zhang laoshi yet? Do you need me to introduce you two?" Zhao Ya said, seeing the two of them standing by the doorway.

"I've already met with Zhang laoshi." At this point, Zhao Feng looked at his daughter. "Little Ya, it's your fortune to be able to come under Zhang laoshi's tutelage. You must listen to him obediently in the future, you mustn't throw tantrums like you did in the past!"

"Yeah!" Zhao Ya nodded her head.

"Also, given Zhang laoshi's capabilities, it is unlikely that he will remain in Tianxuan Kingdom for long. If he asks if you are willing to follow him, you must grab hold of the opportunity. Otherwise, you will regret it for your entire life..." Zhao Feng emphasized the word "regret" strongly and his high expectations for his daughter reflected in his eyes. "Perhaps... the matter regarding saving your mother... he might be the only one who can do it!"

"Yes!" Zhao Ya clenched her fists tightly.

.....

"I should first see how this Enlightenment Jade works!"

After the pair left, Zhang Xuan turned his attention to the Enlightenment Jade in his hands.

Logically speaking, as Zhang Xuan possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, he could easily see the flaws in the cultivation of others. Even if he didn't possess the State of Insight of Heart of Tranquil Water, it didn't affect him much.

However, it was the prerequisite for one to take the master teacher examination.

It wasn't feasible for Zhang Xuan to continue passing off as a master teacher for long.

It was analogous to driving without a license in his previous life. Even an experienced racer would have to keep his guard up at all times when on the road, fearful of getting nabbed.

More importantly, the Master Teacher Pavilions of the world were known to have innumerable books. If he wanted to raise his strength swiftly, it was important for him to have this official identity so that he could access them.

"Absorb!"

Thinking so, Zhang Xuan entered the State of Mind 2-dan once more and he felt a cold sensation seeping into his body through his palms. Slowly, his expended Soul Depth recovered.

"It works!"

Sensing the change in his body, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. Thus, he continued to immerse himself within the absorption of the Enlightenment Jade, greedily taking into the energy within it.

Soon, he felt his that his expended Soul Depth had finally recovered, reaching 0.1 once more.

However, after reaching 0.1, he was unable to absorb any more from the Enlightenment Jade, as though he had reached his capacity.

"Looks like without a suitable technique to utilize along with this, this object is useless!"

Zhang Xuan deduced that the object worked like one's cultivation. Even with the necessary resources raise one's cultivation, without a cultivation technique, it was impossible for one to achieve a breakthrough.

Unable to absorb any further, Zhang Xuan could only retreat from the Heart of Tranquil Water.

Spiritual energy and zhenqi worked just like flowing water. It would only travel downhill. If one wanted to reverse the situation, one had to utilize special methods, and practicing a cultivation technique was one of them.

It was true that the Enlightenment Jade could raise one's Soul Depth, but without a suitable technique to pair with it, it was futile.

"Forget it, I'll just put aside for now until I find some books on it. I should first skim over the golden book."

Knowing that worrying over this problem was useless, Zhang Xuan turned his attention to the golden book in the Library of Heaven's Path.

When his students stood up against Lu Xun to protect his reputation, the golden book abruptly appeared in the library. Now that he was finally done with his work, it was time to look into the matter.

With a jolt of his mind, the book appeared before him. A new golden page had

appeared in it.

"Whether it appears due to one's gratitude still needs some looking into, just that... what is the use of this thing?"

Staring at the book intently, Zhang Xuan was puzzled.

The last time he was studying the book, the book suddenly disappeared and he passed out. When he finally regained consciousness, all of the knowledge contained in the library assimilated with his mind, becoming his.

Could this be the only use of this seemingly incredible-looking object?

If it wasn't, there wasn't any an instruction manual to it... The more he tried to examine it, the more confused he became.

"I should try using the Library of Heaven's Path to ascertain it!"

After staring at it for a long time, Zhang Xuan was still unable to comprehend anything about it. Suddenly, a thought appeared in his mind.

He might not be able to tell anything about it just by looking at it, but the library could!

Just like the poison aura from before, there didn't seem to be anything which this overpowered tool couldn't see the flaw of.

However, the golden book existed in his mind. Even though he seemed like to be holding the book, it was actually an avatar of his spiritual consciousness. Since he wasn't coming into direct physical contact with it, he didn't know whether a book on it could be formed.

"Flaws!"

Clutching the book in his grasp, Zhang Xuan thought.

Looking around, there weren't any new books in sight. From the looks of it, spiritual contact didn't allow him to look into the flaws of an object.

"Seems like I can only use the brute force method then..."

After trying for a few times, Zhang Xuan smiled wryly.

Since that method didn't work, he could only write down his hypothesis and allow the library to ascertain them.

Taking out an empty book, Zhang Xuan lifted up his brush and started writing on it. "The only use of the golden book is to assimilate the content contained within the library and turn them into the owner's."

Weng!

A similar book appeared in his mind. Flipping through it, the flaw in his statement appeared. "Assimilating knowledge is just one of its abilities. It isn't its only use."

"There really are other uses for it!"

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

How could a book generated by such an overpowered cheat code only have one use? There were indeed other uses to it!

However, Zhang Xuan would have to guess the uses of the page.

"The name of this book is.... Golden Book!"

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan continued writing.

Soon, the flaws on the statement appeared in the compiled book. "The name 'Golden Book' is wrong. The name of the book is [Book of Heaven's Path]."

"Book of Heaven's Path? Such a domineering name... However, its name doesn't matter to me at all. I need to know its uses!"

Zhang Xuan frowned.

He already knew that assimilating the contents of the book into his knowledge was one of the uses, but the other uses eluded him.

"Can it create a cultivation technique that can raise one's Soul Depth?"

Just when he was pondering over what he should ask, a thought appeared in his mind.

He had been worried over his Soul Depth for the entire day. Since the Book of Heaven's Path seemed to wield incredible abilities, could it create a cultivation technique that could raise his Soul Depth?

As his thoughts were wandering about, before he could do anything, the book before him trembled violently before turning into a radiant burst of light, covering the entire library with its brilliance.

Hu!

This time, he didn't pass out. Soon, the light gradually faded and the library returned back to normal. Swiftly turning his vision to the golden book, just like before, the golden book was still there, but the empty golden page had disappeared once more.

"Could it be that... it has really formed a cultivation technique that can raise my Soul Depth?"

The moment he was pondering if it could raise his Soul Depth, the golden page disappeared. Could there be a secret manual regarding the cultivation of Soul Depth in the library now?

As he thought this, he immediately looked around anxiously.

Chapter 231

Book of Heaven's Path (Second Half)

After searching for a long time, to Zhang Xuan's disappointment, there wasn't any new book in the library, much less a Soul Depth cultivation technique.

"Could I have wasted the golden page for nothing?"

Zhang Xuan felt awkward.

If that were truly the case, then Zhang Xuan would have made a huge loss.

Putting everything else aside, its ability of assimilating the contents of books into his knowledge was already an incredible one. Currently, he had all of the books in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault in the library. If he could convert all of it into his knowledge, he would gain significant understanding and knowledge on the various occupations in the world.

Yet... he wasted a golden page for nothing?

Did it have to be that awful?

Unwilling to give up at this, he continued searching around. However, he wasn't able to find the cultivation technique he was looking for. In the end, Zhang Xuan could only retract his consciousness from the library gloomily.

The moment his consciousness returned to his physical body, a commotion broke out around him.

"I don't think Zhang laoshi is cultivating!"

"But if he isn't cultivating, what can he be doing with his eyes tightly shut? Can it be that he's asleep?"

"If he's cultivating, spiritual energy should gather in the surroundings. However, there isn't any disturbance in the spiritual energy around us now!"

"If he isn't cultivating or sleeping, can it be that Zhang laoshi... Zhang laoshi, don't go..."

Before Zhang Xuan could even speak, a fatty hugged him. Then he felt his head spinning.

'Don't go? Go your head! My consciousness just went into the library and due to my focus in there, I didn't pay much attention to my surroundings. Why do you make it sound as though I have passed away?'

Irritated, Zhang Xuan nearly went on a rampage.

"Shut up!"

Bellowing loudly, Zhang Xuan opened his eyes.

"Ah, Zhang laoshi, you aren't dead? Great! I thought that you passed away in your sleep..."

Looking at Zhang laoshi, whose face was gradually turning dark by the moment, Yuan Tao's voice slowly grew softer.

When they entered the classroom, they saw Zhang laoshi sitting on a chair with his eyes tightly shut without the slightest bit of motion. Initially, they thought that he was resting, so they didn't pay it much heed. However, after a couple of minutes passed, they walked forward to wake Zhang Xuan up. They even shouted into his ear, but after seeing that Zhang Xuan didn't have any reaction, they panicked.

They quickly rushed forward to examine his condition, resulting in the previous events.

Just when he was about to teach the foul-mouthed Yuan Tao a lesson, Zheng Yang walked over. "Teacher, Wang Chao laoshi and Master Wang Chong have been waiting at the entrance of the classroom for a while now. Do you wish to meet them?"

"Wang Chao? Wang Chong? Allow them to enter!" Zhang Xuan gestured.

"Wang Chong has brought his unfilial son to seek for Zhang laoshi's forgiveness..."

Upon entering, Wang Chong immediately greeted Zhang Xuan humbly.

Knowing that he was here to apologize for his son's deeds, Zhang Xuan didn't say anything.

Even though Wang Chao tried to humiliate him in public several times and his actions were detestable, he didn't overstep his moral boundaries and resort to unscrupulous means. Honestly speaking, he wasn't an evil person. The reason why he kept tripping Zhang Xuan up was in consideration for his friend.

Since Zhang Xuan was able to forgive Lu Xun, forgiving this fellow wasn't a big deal.

Initially, Wang Chao was still hostile toward Zhang Xuan, but after hearing that the latter allowed Wang Chong to impart the Heaven's Path Spear Art to him, his entire body trembled in agitation.

He had seen the strength of the Heaven's Path Spear Art for himself earlier. Ever since then, his heart had been itching for it. Upon hearing that he was given the permission to learn it, his resentment toward Zhang laoshi turned into gratitude and admiration.

After the duo left, Clan Head Wang Hong and Clan Head Bai Ming came to visit. Then, to Zhao Ya's and the others' dumbfounded faces, the principal, Elder Tian, Guild Leader Ouyang, Shen Bi Ru laoshi, Han Qiong laoshi...

Due to the remote location of the classroom, rarely anyone came to this cramped classroom. But at this moment, it seemed to have become the core of the academy. All of the prestigious and powerful figures in Tianxuan City all came to pay Zhang Xuan a visit.

Zhang Xuan hated dealing with these matters, but as all of them had personally come to pay him a visit, it would be disrespectful for him to shut them out. As a result, he could only continue welcoming them one by one.

To Zhang Xuan's delight, they seemed to realize that he wasn't too fond of welcoming guests, so they took their leaves after chatting for a moment.

"Zhang Xuan, are you leaving Hongtian Academy?"

His last guest, Shen Bi Ru, stayed for awhile before asking.

Initially, as the most beautiful woman of the academy and a talented teacher, it should have been impossible for her to be related to a horridly-reputed, low-level teacher. Yet,

to everyone's astonishment, Zhang Xuan suddenly rose through the ranks and, in a short span of twenty days, made a name for himself, even becoming the senior of the three master teachers.

Given the great potential he wielded, a small place like the Hongtian Academy would be insufficient to house him. It was a matter of time before he left the country.

Even though she understood that it was unavoidable, she couldn't help but feel slightly dejected.

The duo were just colleagues, but this young man was the first one to pique her curiosity and attract her attention. She couldn't help but feel reluctant to part with him so soon.

"Yeah!"

Oblivious to the thoughts of the lady, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

The reason why he continued staying in the academy was for his students. Now that they had grown up, he had received his qualifications as an assistant master teacher, and reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle, it was time for him to explore the world.

Furthermore, he needed to deal with the poison aura in his body.

Otherwise, it would be equivalent to carrying a ticking time bomb on him. He didn't want to die right before he could enjoy his new life in this world.

"Then... where are you headed? Beiwu Kingdom?" Shen Bi Ru asked, upon hearing the other party confirming her doubts.

Even though she felt reluctant to part, she knew that the gap between her and this young genius would only grow wider as time went by. Even if she pursued him, they would still have to part eventually.

In the end, they were worlds apart.

"No, I'm heading for Tianwu Kingdom!" Zhang Xuan said.

It was likely for there to be a Poison Hall in the Red Lotus Ridge. Since he was leaving Tianxuan to resolve the poison aura in his body, he should naturally first take a look

there.

"Tier 1 Tianwu Kingdom? That far?" Shen Bi Ru was taken aback. "Even though the two countries are considered neighbors with one another on the map, they are actually tens of thousand of kilometers apart. How do you intend to head there?"

"I am still thinking over the issue..." Zhang Xuan hesitated.

Having looked through the atlases in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, he knew that the continent he was in was vast and boundless.

The other party was right. Even though Tianwu and Tianxuan were said to be countries close to one another, they were tens of thousands of kilometers apart. Even the fastest steed would require several months.

In fact, if it wasn't for the distance separating Tianxuan from the other countries, it would have been annexed by some of the more powerful states already. It couldn't have remained an independent entity as it was now.

"What is there to think about? You should just take the [Beast Mount] of the Beast Hall!" Han Qiong stretched her back as she interjected with a smile.

"Beast Hall? Beast mount?"

"The Beast Hall, also known as the Beast Tamer Guild, is a place similar to the Apothecary Guild and the Blacksmith Guild. Founded by beast tamers, the aerial beasts they tamed, also known as beast mounts, serve as a means of transportation for humans. Possessing rapid speed, they are capable of traveling great distances swiftly. Even though Tianwu Kingdom is far from here, if you ride a beast mount, it would just be a few days away," Han Qiong said.

"Oh?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

Wasn't this similar to the airplane in his previous life?

"Han Qiong, don't spout nonsense!" Shen Bi Ru rolled her eyes. "The beast mounts you spoke of are the fastest Lightning Mounts. Every single of those has strength in the Zongshi realm, and there is only one of those in the entire Beast Hall. Only the highly-esteemed master teachers or official beast tamers are qualified to ride them. Those that are available to normal people like us are, at best, capable of flying three thousand

kilometers per day."

"Yeah, Shen laoshi is right. Those Lightning Mounts aren't something that anyone can just ride. Even assistant master teachers aren't qualified to ride them!" Han Qiong nodded, agreeing with Shen Bi Ru.

Zhang Xuan felt that that was logical as well. If anyone could ride the best beast mounts, it wouldn't be a privilege anymore. As a result, he didn't dawdle on this issue and continued asking questions.

"Does Tianxuan Kingdom have a Beast Hall?"

Even though Zhang Xuan had seen the Apothecary Guild, the Blacksmith Guild, and the Teacher Guild, he had never heard of the Beast Hall.

Even though Zhang Xuan had just transcended over, he had inherited the memories of his previous self. If there really was a Beast Hall here, there wasn't any reason why he wouldn't have heard of it.

"There is a Beast Hall, but it isn't in the capital. It's in the mountain ranges not too far away!"

Shen Bi Ru chuckled lightly, "You should be aware that savage beasts like to live carefree and unrestrained lives. As such, their natural habitat is the mountain forests. If the Beast Hall were to be built in the kingdom, with countless savage beasts running and flying about all day long, many people would be scared out of their wits!"

"That's true!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head with understanding.

Savage beasts were ferocious and wild in nature. If they were reared in small cages all day long, they wouldn't survive for long.

This was also the reason why wild hares and boars were difficult to be domesticated.

"What? Do you want to try the Beast Hall? Do you need me to bring you there? I've been there a few times and I know its location quite well. Also, I have quite a few acquaintances there, so there is a chance that I could get a good aerial savage beast for you."

Han Qiong laoshi chuckled.

"Hmph!" Hearing the clear flirtatious tone her good friend spoke with, Shen Bi Ru frowned. "Zhang laoshi, don't listen to her. If you wish to go to the Beast Hall, I can lead the way!"

"I'll be troubling Shen laoshi then!" Zhang Xuan also found the flirtatious Han laoshi hard to deal with, so he chose to take Shen laoshi up on her offer.

Compared to Han laoshi, he was much more comfortable with Shen laoshi.

Besides, they were well-acquainted with each other.

"Alright!" Shen Bi Ru nodded her head. "So, when do we head out? I need to prepare in advance."

"I have a public lesson tomorrow. After that, I'll leave straightaway!" Zhang Xuan said after contemplating for a moment.

It was best for him to deal with the poison aura lingering in his body as soon as possible. Since he had already decided to leave, there was no need to stall.

"Alright, I'll make some preparations then!"

Shen laoshi nodded her head and left with Han Qiong.

The moment she left the classroom, she turned to look at Han Qiong. "Han laoshi, it can't be that you're actually interested in Zhang laoshi?"

"Me?" Han Qiong gazed at her best friend with a suggestive grin. "I should be the one asking that question, right? I was just trying you out to see how you would react. To think that you would immediately offer to go with him... Hehe, this isn't what the great Ice Queen Shen of our academy would do!"

"I..." Shen Bi Ru blushed.

"I know that you're interested in him, and honestly speaking, I can understand why you would like him. However..."

Han Qiong shook her head grimly, and the lighthearted attitude she had just a moment ago disappeared.

"Despite his strength and potential, he was able to turn away from material gains and losses, tolerating humiliation for so such a long period of time... As long as no mishaps happen to him, it is just a matter of time before he makes a name for himself!"

"Such a person..."

"We aren't worthy of him!"

Chapter 232

The Confused Liu Xun

Oblivious to Shen Bi Ru's and Han Qiong's thoughts, Zhang Xuan pinched his brows distressed. Whenever he thought about the things he had to take care of before his departure, deep circles would appear beneath his eyes.

"Zhang laoshi, don't abandon us..."

"You are going to Tianwu Kingdom? Bring us along as well!"

"We want to be with Teacher..."

The ones speaking were Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and the other students.

They had heard Zhang Xuan's conversation with the other two teachers and anticipation gleamed in their eyes.

"You want to follow me?"

Zhang Xuan turned to look at them, "You guys should reconsider. I'm heading to a higher tier kingdom; there will be many experts there. Countless dangers lay in wait if you choose to make this journey, and the slightest mistake could potentially bring about your deaths!"

"We understand!" all five of them replied resolutely.

In the fortnight they had been with Zhang laoshi, they had seen for themselves how he treated them sincerely and gave his all to raise their cultivation, not expecting anything in return. Their relationship had already surpassed that of the typical teacher and student relationship.

"There's no need for you guys to rush your decisions. I will give you all a night to contemplate. You guys can tell me tomorrow!" Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

Honestly speaking, the affection his students had for him wasn't a one-way street.

After teaching them for a fortnight, he had also slowly come to love them. He wanted them to think this over carefully before coming to a decision. He wanted them to make a decision out of their own will and not through peer pressure.

Furthermore, even if he decided to bring them along, they would have to learn to fend for themselves. After all, there were some places where it wouldn't be safe for Zhang Xuan to bring them, such as the Red Lotus Ridge where the Poison Hall was rumored to be. It was already difficult for Zhang Xuan to guarantee his own safety, much less the safety of these kids.

"Zhang laoshi, there's no need for me to consider any further. You gave me everything I have. I will follow you everywhere, no matter where you go!"

Yuan Tao shook his head and knelt on the floor. Determination gleamed in his eyes.

As an orphan, he had no access to cultivation resources whatsoever. Despite being the worst student in his batch, Zhang laoshi nurtured him step by step, giving him the best cultivation technique, the best pills, and the best education...

Only in this way did he achieve the strength he had now.

As a result, there was no need for him to consider any longer. Wherever Zhang laoshi went, he would follow him.

"Zhang laoshi, my thoughts are the same. I beg you not to chase us away. We are willing to serve as your students... and we will remain your students our entire lifetime!" The second one to kneel down was the usually gentle and weak Wang Ying.

"Zhang laoshi, I beg you to bring us along!"

Then Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and Liu Yang knelt down as well. Immovable faith could be seen in their eyes.

His five students might have been young, but they had shown determination beyond their years. Even though Zhang Xuan had lived two lives, he felt excited within.

"I can bring all of you with me, but you won't be following me. I will have Liu Shi and the others bring you guys straight to Tianwu Royal City. After I'm done with my business, I will head over to look for you all!" Zhang Xuan said after hesitating for a moment.

After he took care of the poison aura in his body, he would have to head to Tianwu City to try his hand at the master teacher examination.

With Liu Shi and the others looking after them, it should be much safer.

"Thank you, Teacher!"

Upon hearing that Zhang Xuan was willing to take them with him, their eyes immediately reddened in excitement.

They didn't know what repercussions their decision today would bring to the entire continent. Neither could they have imagined what kind of heights they would reach because of this very choice.

"Alright, you guys should go back and make preparations. It's hard to tell how long we'll be away from Tianxuan Kingdom, so remember to say your farewells properly!" Zhang Xuan gestured.

"Right!"

The five of them nodded their heads before retreating from the classroom.

After taking care of his students, Zhang Xuan returned to his residence and met with Liu Ling and the others, back in his disguise as Yang Shi. When he spoke of his intention to leave, a dejected and disappointed expression appeared on their faces.

After that, he had them take out their cultivation techniques and offered them some guidance on their cultivation. Eventually, Liu Ling managed to surpass his bottleneck and reach Zongshi realm.

Zheng Fei had just reached Half-Zongshi not too long ago, so it was difficult for him to make the leap within a short period of time. On the other hand, Zhuang Xian had managed to improve significantly as well. As long as he continued building up his foundation, he should be able to try for Zongshi realm within half a month.

After entrusting that "direct disciple" of his to the care of the three master teachers, Yang Shi went to look for Sun Qiang.

"Old master, don't abandon me. I want to follow you..."

The moment Zhang Xuan walked in, Sun Qiang immediately knelt on the floor.

Just like Yuan Tao, he didn't have any powerful backers. Before meeting with Zhang Xuan, he was just an unimpressive merchant in Tianyu Commercial City.

The one who had brought him respect and prestige was the man before him, and he felt gratitude and reluctance to part from him.

"If you wish to follow me, look for Zhang Xuan laoshi at Hongtian Academy tomorrow and serve him well. I will drop by from time to time when I'm free," Zhang Xuan said.

Even though Sun Qiang had weak cultivation, he got things done. After becoming a master teacher, Zhang Xuan would have to deal with significantly more problems. It would be convenient for him to have someone like Sun Qiang resolve those miscellaneous issues. Furthermore, Sun Qiang had been following Yang shi and he had proven his trustworthiness, thus making him suitable for the job.

"Yes!" Upon hearing that the old master didn't intend to abandon him, Sun Qiang immediately nodded his head with excitement.

"Your cultivation is still a little too weak, so I created a cultivation technique for you. Cultivate properly. I hope that the next time we meet, you'll possess strength befitting your dignity!" After handing him a secret manual, Zhang Xuan said firmly, "Do not let me down!"

"Old master, I will give it my all!" Sun Qiang replied seriously.

The old master's words rang true. His greatest flaw was his cultivation. It was shameful for him to only be at Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm despite being the butler of a master teacher.

He was done with his previous life. If he wanted to continue serving the old master, he had to build up his strength.

"Dismissed!"

By the time Zhang Xuan was finished with the necessary instructions, the sky had already turned dark. As there would be a public lecture tomorrow morning, Zhang Xuan chose to rest.

As he slowly drifted off to sleep, the issue regarding the Book of Heaven's Path popped into his mind. The mysterious disappearance of the golden page bewildered him, but there wasn't anything he could do about it at this point.

....

Liu Xun was the most outstanding member of the younger generation of the Liu Clan, one of the Four Great Clans. At twenty-three years old, he had already achieved a cultivation realm of Pixue realm primary stage. More importantly, his teacher was a 1-star master teacher of Jinyang Kingdom and he had an in-depth comprehension of cultivation.

After studying abroad for three years, he rushed home, eager to see his family. Before the sun had even risen, he had arrived at the entrance to his clan's home. He was about to enter when he suddenly saw clan members sprinting out.

"Hurry up, otherwise we'll be late!"

"Indeed, we should make haste!"

"This is a good opportunity. If we miss it, we'll definitely regret it for our entire lives!"

Most of those who emerged from the gate were of the younger generation, but there were also a few who were in their thirties. They had a brush and book in their hands, and anxiety could be seen on their faces.

"What is everyone up to? Is someone causing trouble with our Liu Clan?"

Upon seeing their expressions, Liu Xun frowned. Driving his zhenqi, he immediately surveyed his surroundings wearily. However, he soon abandoned that thought.

If someone was causing trouble with the Liu Clan, the upper echelons would definitely appear as well. More importantly... if they were going to pick a fight with someone, why would they bring their books and brushes along?

Unless they were planning to fling ink into the faces of their enemies!

"Cousin Liu Xun, you're back!" During his bewilderment, a young lady suddenly walked next to him.

"Yu'er, this is..."

As cousins, he had grown up alongside Yu'er. In the years that he was away, she was admitted into Hongtian Academy and came under Lu Xun laoshi's tutelage. A bright future stood before her.

"Oh, Zhang Xuan laoshi is about to conduct a public lecture. We're here to attend his lesson. Since you've returned, you might as well come along with us!"

Yu'er chuckled.

"Zhang Xuan laoshi?" Liu Xun frowned. "The garbage teacher you mentioned in your letters? What's so good about his lecture?"

Even though he had left Tianxuan Kingdom for several years, the clan had been keeping him abreast of the matters occurring here.

Zhang Xuan's horrid reputation had spread far and wide, and even students several thousand kilometers away had heard of his name.

"He isn't garbage. He is a true star teacher!" Yu'er tugged on his hand. "Hurry up! Otherwise we won't be able to get any good seats."

"Unable to get any good seats? He's conducting a lesson so early in the morning?" Liu Xun asked baffled.

"It's not a morning lecture, it's an afternoon one!"

"Afternoon?" Liu Xun nearly fainted from shock.

If it's an afternoon lecture, why are you all rushing there so eagerly when the day has barely started? What in the world are you doing?

"Just listen to me. We should hurry. I'll tell you about it when we're there!" Yu'er ushered him toward Hongtian Academy agitated.

Seeing how flustered Yu'er and the other clan members were, Liu Xun couldn't stifle his curiosity and followed along.

"These are.... the clan members of the Bai Clan?"

A short distance away, they saw a group of people rushing to the academy as well.

The group was significantly larger than theirs and even some elders with white beards were among them. Their eyes glowed with anticipation, as though a huge treasure were awaiting them.

With a single glance, Liu Xun recognized them as the members of the Bai Clan, one of the Four Great Clans as well.

"That is... Clan Head Bai Ming? He... came as well?"

Taking a quick look around, Liu Xun caught sight of a figure at the front of the crowd and he shuddered.

It was Clan Head Bai Ming!

To think that he was leading the group personally! And they were heading in the same direction too!

"That is... Clan Head Wang Hong?"

Before he could recover from his shock, another group appeared from around the corner. They were also heading to Hongtian Academy. He recognized the leader of the pack, Clan Head Wang Hong of the Four Great Clans, Wang Clan!

Clan Head Wang Hong was known for his haughty personality and his powerful cultivation. In fact, he could be considered as the de facto leader of the Four Great Clans, but... why was he also here?

Furthermore, he had a brush and book in his hands...

"Du Miaoxuan of the Du Clan? Du Yuan... and all of the younger generation of the Du Clan?"

A moment later, he saw clan members of the Du Clan as well. Similar to everyone else, they were carrying a brush and book each as well, and they were charging toward Hongtian Academy excitedly as well.

All of the Four Great Clans were actually gathered at the same spot. Liu Xun felt the world spinning around him, and he nearly slipped and fell.

"Yu'er, what's going on?"

Unable to suppress his curiosity any longer, he turned to look at his cousin.

"They're all here for Zhang laoshi's lecture!" Yu'er replied.

"They're all here for the lecture? Could that Zhang laoshi... be a master teacher?" Liu Xun was stumped by her answer.

Other than master teachers, there didn't seem to be anyone else who could possibly rally the clan heads of the Four Great Clans to attend a lecture personally.

"He isn't a master teacher!" Yu'er shook her head.

"He isn't? Then..."

Bewildered, Liu Xun was just about to ask why an ordinary teacher was able to rally so many people to attend his lecture when the girl's voice chimed once more.

"Even though he isn't a master teacher, he is a master teacher's..."

"Senior!"

Chapter 233

Teacher Zhang, You're Here

"The senior of the master teachers?"

Not only did Liu Xun not understand what his cousin was saying, he even felt more bewildered now. He convulsed intensely, as though suffering from a stroke.

As a student of a master teacher, he understood how prestigious a master teacher's standing was.

Even the emperor of Tianxuan Kingdom wouldn't dare to act arrogantly around a master teacher.

With a single word, they could easily eradicate a country off the map.

This was the might of a master teacher!

And Zhang Xuan was such a person's... senior?

Are you mistaken?

When did such an impressive figure appear in Tianxuan Kingdom?

In an instant, he subconsciously assumed that the Zhang Xuan everyone was talking about wasn't the same Zhang Xuan he knew.

One was a useless teacher whereas the other one was the senior of the master teachers. Their standings were worlds apart so how could they be the same person?

While Liu Xun's thoughts wandered, he soon reached Hongtian Academy.

The first thing that came into his sight was a massive crowd. Each of them had a brush and a notebook in their hands, and they were rushing to the sparring field excitedly.

"This is... the famous lone adventurer, Cangsong Swordsman, Bai Song? Is that

Swordsman Zhu Hongyi who dared to mock the entire world? Old Master Zhao who was able to shake even the Heavens with his saber? The single-armed Ye Tianxiong who instills fright in all? Are you sure... they are all here to listen to the lecture?"

Recognizing the famous figures in the crowd, Liu Xun's lips twitched and he nearly passed out from the shock.

These were incredible figures whose names had spread throughout the whole of the Tianxuan Kingdom for numerous years. His father, despite being the clan head of the Liu Clan, would have to treat them with respect. In fact, even the emperor would find it hard to invite them to the royal palace. Yet, at this moment, they were all holding a brush and book in their hands, and it seemed as though they were waiting excitedly for something...

What kind of public lecture was this?

"Indeed!" Yu'er nodded her head enthusiastically. "Yesterday, Zhang laoshi said that he was going to talk about the fundamental knowledge of cultivation. As the news spread, figures like them appeared!"

"Wait a moment, you're saying that... it's just a lecture on fundamental knowledge?"

Liu Xun staggered and nearly faceplanted.

Lessons on fundamental knowledge revolved around how one could cultivate, how one gathered spiritual energy, how one utilized the spiritual energy absorbed to temper their body.... this knowledge was only useful to those who were Fighter 2-dan and below, yet these elders, clan heads, and Tongxuan realm experts had sprinted here..... Why?

Are you completely certain they are here to listen to a lecture on fundamental knowledge of cultivation, not to start a coup d'état?

"Yes! I was close to the dueling ring when he spoke of it previously, so I heard his words loud and clear!" Yu'er nodded her head. Upon recalling the mighty image of Zhang laoshi yesterday, she couldn't help but feel thrilled for the lecture afterward.

A bunch of Tongxuan experts listening to a lecture on fundamental knowledge of cultivation?

Why did Liu Xun find the sight incredulous?

"Ah, I knew it. We came too late..."

Just when he was overwhelmed with shock and disbelief, he heard an exclamation from his cousin. Lifting his head to take a look, his eyes narrowed once more.

The massive stands of Hongtian Academy, which could house up to ten thousand people, were already crowded with people. There were even a few who had mats laid out over the seats, and from the looks of it, they had been camping here since yesterday.

"Those who are at the very front are... teachers of the academy?"

Seated at the very front were the teachers of Hongtian Academy. Even though they didn't set out mats on the ground to rest, judging from the dew on their body, they had definitely waited here overnight.

To think that he thought his cousin and the other clan members were making too much of a fuss by rushing to an afternoon lecture at daybreak. Never in his dreams did he expect the teachers of the academy to camp overnight at the stadium just for the lecture.

"There are no seats anymore. Looks like we'll have to stand..." Yu'er was on the verge of tears.

A sea of people blocked their way. Other than the teachers and students of Hongtian Academy, all kinds of powers from Tianxuan Royal City were also at the venue. If not for the fact that he knew that someone was going to conduct a lecture, he would have thought that someone was planning an uprising.

"Yu'er, what kind of person is Elder Zhang Xuan?" Liu Xun asked his cousin, forcefully suppressing his shock.

At this point, his confused gaze had been replaced with a fiery one.

"Elder?"

"Indeed!" Liu Xun nodded his head.

Even his teacher, as a 1-star master teacher, would be unable to gather such a crowd for a lecture on fundamental knowledge of cultivation.

Since this Zhang laoshi was the senior of the master teachers, even if he wasn't a master teacher, he had to be advanced in age. There shouldn't be a mistake in addressing him with "elder."

"Cough, Zhang Xuan laoshi isn't even in his twenties yet. He is younger than you..." Upon seeing Liu Xun's serious gaze, Yu'er's face turned red.

"Not in his twenties?"

Liu Xun froze.

Under twenty... Yet, he was the senior of the master teachers... Not to mention, making so many people willing wait an entire night, just to listen to his public lecture?

"This..."

Liu Xun felt his horizons expand. Unable to hold it in any longer, he asked, "Can... can you tell me the details of this Zhang laoshi?"

"Speaking of Zhang laoshi, I have to begin from the Teacher Evaluation. Oh, no, it should be the cultivation of a student of his going berserk..."

Before she could finish her words, a commotion stirred in front of them. Lifting their heads to take a look, they saw three elders walking over. Wherever they walked by, the crowd would immediately shuffle aside to give way to them.

"It's... Beiwu Kingdom's Liu shi and Zhuang shi? Also.... Hanwu Kingdom's Zheng shi?"

Liu Xun immediately recognized the trio.

As the student of a master teacher, he had the honor of meeting the three of them once. Back then, his teacher had treated them respectfully, claiming that he wasn't able to match up to them.

To think that the three of them were at Tianxuan Kingdom, and furthermore...

"Could it be that... they're here to listen to the lecture as well?"

The waves of shock had pounded him ever since his arrival at the Liu Clan's gate and dumbfounded him.

"Indeed, Zhang laoshi is the senior of the three master teachers!" Yu'er nodded her head.

"He is their..." Liu Xun was on the verge of tears. Initially, he thought that he could brag about being the student of a master teacher after returning, but from the looks of it...

His feats meant nothing at all.

Despite not being in his twenties, that person was a star teacher, as well as the senior of the three master teachers...

Exactly what kind of person was this Zhang laoshi?

....

By the time Zhang Xuan woke up, it was already afternoon. Sun Qiang had ordered the servants to prepare some food for him, so after eating well, Zhang Xuan headed for the academy.

Initially, he thought that there wouldn't be anyone since it wasn't time yet, but upon seeing the horde gathered there, he was stunned.

As too many people had pleaded for Zhang Xuan to admit them under his tutelage, Zhang Xuan could only compromise and offhandedly agreed to hold a public lecture.

He thought that only a few people would come; after all, it was just a lecture on the fundamental knowledge of cultivation, and it was only useful for those beneath Zhenqi realm... Yet, what the hell was with this crowd?

"Excuse me, can you allow me to pass?"

After circling around the dueling ring, he wasn't able to find any openings for him to enter. As a result, he could only pat on the shoulder of a young man.

"Pass? You wish to cut in line? I arrived early in the morning to listen to Zhang laoshi's lesson. Get to the end of the line!"

The young man waved him away impatiently.

The young man was Liu Xun!

Wasn't this fellow too brazen!

He and his sister had been lining up since early morning, and even then, they were only able to squeeze into the outer perimeter. Yet, that fellow was telling him to allow him to pass... He must be kidding!

Of all the people here, you just had to choose me to give way to you. Are you trying to bully me just because I've just returned?

Furthermore, even if I allow you to pass, how far do you think you can get?

"Get to the back of the line?"

A bizarre expression appeared on Zhang Xuan's face. Where did this fellow pop out from?

"Indeed, if you wanted to get good seats, you should have come earlier. Wanting to cut the line of others after coming at such a time... Brother, let me give you a warning. If you continue to try to squeeze your way in, you'll just be pummeled by the others!" Liu Xun said seriously.

After hearing about the details of Zhang Xuan laoshi from his cousin, Liu Xun's admiration for the former had soared to the high heavens. He finally understood why everyone had rushed here to listen to his lecture.

Putting aside the fact he was the direct disciple of a master teacher whose rank was beyond that of 2-star, the 1-dan Juxi realm students he had groomed from the start of the semester were able to fight squarely against a Pixue realm pinnacle expert just after half a month of lessons... This was an unimaginable feat! His lecture was indeed worthy of the arrival of all of these experts!

Even if they weren't here to learn, it was a good opportunity for them to get close to him!

If Yang shi were to arrive on the spot personally, everything would be even more perfect.

Honestly speaking, most of these Tongxuan realm experts weren't interested in the lecture. They wanted to use this opportunity to get closer ties with Zhang Xuan and, if possible, strike up a relationship with Yang shi through Zhang Xuan.

After all, the words of a direct disciple were much more authoritative than a mere butler.

"Cough, rest assured. They won't beat me up!" Upon realizing that the fellow didn't recognize him, Zhang Xuan could only shake his head helplessly.

"They won't?" Seeing that the other party didn't believe his words, Liu Xun was displeased. "I don't know where your confidence comes from, but since you said so, I'll allow you to pass then. But if someone does beat you up later on, don't blame me for not warning you!"

"Thank you..."

Upon seeing the young man before him opening up a space for him, he stepped forward. Just when he was about to proceed further ahead, a lady in front seemed to have noticed the commotion behind and turned around.

"Ah, Zhang laoshi. You're here...."

The lady's face flushed in excitement.

Cangsong Swordsman -> Literally translated to Green Pines. There is an idiom on how pines were green all year long, and it refers to an upright person.

Chapter 234

Soul Depth Exceeding 3?

Zhang Xuan nodded his head and continued proceeding forward.

The voice of the lady was sonorous and attracted the attention of many. The crowd immediately opened up a path for him.

"He, he... is Zhang laoshi?"

Seeing the young man he had just "reprimanded" walking toward the dueling ring, Liu Xun's mouth twitched.

'Didn't you say that Zhang laoshi was nearing his twenties?

'Then why does he look so young... '

More importantly, given how massive the affair was, he should at least wear something more official. To be dressed in everyday attire which probably wasn't even worth a single gold coin...

'Aren't you too laidback!'

When Liu Xun recalled how he lectured the other party for cutting in line, tears threatened to stream down his cheek.

If he wasn't allowed to enter... then what kind of lecture could they hear? The lecture of the wind?

In any case, his embarrassment didn't last for long. Because.... Zhang laoshi's lecture had begun.

Transmitting his voice via zhenqi, despite the huge crowd that had gathered here, everyone could hear every single word of his clearly as though it were spoken right next to their ears.

Initially, Liu Xun didn't pay the lecture much heed. After all, he had been listening to a lecture of a master teacher for three years straight. However, as time went by, his face slowly flushed red and a bright gleam twinkled in his eyes. He felt as though every word was a tonic to his body.

Even though Zhang laoshi was only lecturing on the fundamentals of Juxi realm and Dantian realm, his every word was both profound and simple, and his words pointed straight to the essence of cultivating itself. Hearing his words, the zhenqi in one's body would be automatically triggered, and one couldn't help but cultivate along with his words.

After a moment of driving one's zhenqi around one's body, one would feel a comfortable sensation slowly spreading across oneself. Then, the person's cultivation that had been stuck at the same level for an extremely long time would increase slightly.

Even though it was only a slight increase, it was equivalent to several days of hard work.

To think that a lecture on fundamentals could raise one's cultivation...

If not for personally witnessing the sight, no one would think it possible. No other teacher of Hongtian Academy was capable of such a feat.

Astonished, Liu Xun glanced at the others and realized that everyone was immersed in his lecture. Especially for those who were still at Juxi realm like Yu'er, cultivating through the concepts that Zhang Xuan spoke of seemed to have triggered the spiritual energy in the surroundings to gush into them. Every single one of them improved significantly.

There were even a few who were already at the peak of their current realm breaking into the next one.

"This.... could this be the Impartation of Heaven's Will spoken of in legends?"

Liu Xun's eyes narrowed and he subconsciously clenched his fists tightly together.

Legend told that when a high-tier master teacher lectured on content which aligned with the essence of cultivation, a special force field would be triggered. Within this force field, the listeners would subconsciously drive the zhenqi in their body

according to the method spoken and unknowingly raise their cultivation.

He had heard his teacher speak of this once, but even he was unable to achieve such a feat.

In fact, it was said that even 4-star master teachers would find it hard to achieve such a feat. Yet, a star teacher who wasn't even in his twenties succeeded in doing so?

This...

'Are my eyes playing tricks on me!'

"There's no mistake. Even though this is the most simple form of it, this is Impartation of Heaven's Will."

In a state of disbelief, Liu Ling and the others abruptly stood up. Their eyes narrowed and their white as snow beards trembled.

"Impartation of Heaven's Will isn't a skill accessible to all master teachers. In order to trigger it, one has to fulfill two criteria. First, the content of one's lecture has to dive straight into the essence of cultivation, meaning there mustn't be the slightest error in one's words! Second, the lecturer must possess the State of Insight of Heart of Tranquil Water, and his Soul Depth must be at least 3!"

Zhuang shi's mouth was agape.

Impartation of Heaven's Will was different from bewitching techniques. Rather than bewitching a person to cultivate, it was a result of the lecturer's words being aligned with the very essence of cultivation, thus triggering an intangible force in the world.

The reason why master teachers were so esteemed was because of this ability of theirs.

The heavens seemed to bend to their words, forming order around them.

To trigger Impartation of Heaven's Will, the lecturer needed more than an in-depth knowledge of cultivation. He needed to possess the State of Insight, and his Soul Depth had to reach 3. Otherwise, it was impossible for him to enchant so many people with just his words.

"Could it be that... he has already reached Heart of Tranquil Water, and his Soul Depth... has reached 3?"

The wide-eyed Zheng Fei felt lightheaded.

It was just yesterday that he spoke about Soul Depth to the other party, and it was clear that the other party was completely ignorant of the matter. In the blink of an eye... he achieved a breakthrough, and his Soul Depth even reached 3...

Even though the basic requirement for taking the master teacher examination was 3, not everyone was able to reach such a level upon achieving the State of Insight.

Even when they first reached Heart of Tranquil Water, they were only around 1.5. They had to follow a master teacher and cultivate for several years before they slowly raised it to become qualified to take the master teacher examination.

Yet this fellow only learned about it yesterday, and broke through within the span of a day...

'Do you have to be that fast?

'The breakthroughs of the others were fraught with difficulty, as though ascending a towering mountain, yet yours was as simple as eating and drinking... '

"His Soul Depth has reached 3, and he possesses the skills of a grandmaster painter, and the title of 1-star apothecary. It seems like this senior of ours is already qualified to take the master teacher examination!" Liu Ling said agitated.

Yesterday, he was still thinking that it would take awhile before Zhang Xuan would be qualified to take the master teacher examination. After all, the State of Mind was a difficult hurdle to overcome. It required one accumulate countless experiences before being able to mature to that level. Never in his dreams did he expect that within a single night, not only did Zhang Xuan achieve Heart of Tranquil Water, his Soul Depth was even an astonishing 3.

'What is a genius? This is a genius!'

All of the incredible figures gathered here seemed to pale in comparison.

It was no wonder he became the direct disciple of Yang shi. His talent was truly

nothing short of the word phenomenal.

While they were shocked, the crowd in the stands was immersed in the lecture. Unknowingly, time passed swiftly and Zhang Xuan stopped.

"Thank you Zhang laoshi for your guidance!"

Recovering from the unique state, everyone knew that they had benefited greatly from the lecture, and one after another, they knelt to him in gratitude.

From today onward, this Zhang laoshi was half a teacher to them. This relationship was something that would remain in their memory for the rest of their lives.

Otherwise, they would only be spat on by everyone for being ungrateful.

Zhang Xuan didn't expect that the effects of his lecture would be so extensive. This was completely different to how he had lectured Zhao Ya and the others in the past. Nodding his head in satisfaction, he stepped down from the dueling ring. In the next instant, Liu Ling and the others immediately surrounded him.

"Senior, can you allow me... to check your Soul Depth?"

Liu Ling trembled with excitement.

"Soul Depth?"

Not expecting the other party to speak about this matter, embarrassment appeared on Zhang Xuan face. He wanted to disappear into thin air from the shame.

"Forget it, my Soul Depth... is too low. I'd rather not embarrass myself in front of you all..."

If they knew his Soul Depth was 0.1, they would definitely laugh their heads off.

It was better for him to not humiliate himself.

"Too low?"

The three master teachers swayed. A Soul Depth beyond 3 was low?

'Furthermore, what's with your embarrassed expression?

'Do you think that your Soul Depth of 3 isn't worth mentioning?'

'The heck, any other master teacher apprentice would leap for joy if their Soul Depth turned out to be above 3. They would think they were a genius who only appeared once in a century and brag about it everywhere they went such that the entire world would know. Yet you are embarrassed...

'Senior, aren't you being too ambitious!'

"To be able to induce Impartation of Heaven's Will, your State of Insight Soul Depth must be at least 3. If possible, I would like to see... the value of Senior's Soul Depth!" Liu Ling commented, stifling the urge to spew blood.

"What is Impartation of Heaven's Will?" Zhang Xuan blinked several times confused.

Staggering, Liu Ling and the others were on the verge of tears.

Truly, one man shouldn't be compared to another.

Despite an entire lifetime of hard work, they were unable to induce Impartation of Heaven's Will a single time. Yet this fellow had induced it unknowingly...

Stifling the sensation in his chest, Zhuang Xian started explaining about it to Zhang Xuan. The eyes of the young man before them slowly widened in disbelief.

"You're saying that... my Soul Depth is at least 3?"

Zhang Xuan was dumbfounded.

When he tested his Soul Depth yesterday, it was only 0.1. Why would he suddenly possess a Soul Depth above 3?

"Indeed, Senior. Have you not tested your Soul Depth after achieving Heart of Tranquil Water?"

Seeing the bewildered expression on their senior's face, Liu Ling and the others were speechless.

Other people would be giving their all to brag about their successful breakthrough, yet this fellow was completely oblivious to it.

'Aren't you keeping too low a profile!'

'Could it be... the golden page?'

Ignoring their looks of admiration, a thought suddenly popped into Zhang Xuan's mind.

Yesterday, the golden page has disappeared mysteriously. Could it be that... it had raised his Soul Depth without him knowing?

This possibility was extremely high.

After all, it was the Book of Heaven's Path. Since it could even assimilate the vast knowledge contained in the library into Zhang Xuan's mind, raising Zhang Xuan's Soul Depth shouldn't be an issue.

As he thought this, he saw the looks of anticipation on the faces of the master teachers. So, with a flick of his wrist, he took out a Stone of Insight.

Entering the Heart of Tranquil Water.

Weng!

Numbers appeared on the jade.

Before he could even see it, Liu Ling and the others stared at him stupefied, as though they were staring at a monster.

"Senior, your... your Soul Depth..."

The three master teachers convulsed as though they were experiencing strokes.

Chapter 235

Xuanluo Mountain Range

"Why?"

Upon seeing their stupefied expressions, Zhang Xuan immediately lowered his head to take a look. With a single glance, he froze as well.

Vivid numbers appeared on the jade: 5.1.

"5.1?"

Zhang Xuan finally understood the trauma the three master teachers were going through. Even he was feeling lightheaded with shock at this moment.

He had tested it many times yesterday, and the highest he had ever reached was 0.1. Why did it suddenly soar to 5.1?

Could it be...

"That golden page has raised my Soul Depth by... 5.0?"

Zhang Xuan's mouth twitched.

His eyeballs were about to pop out onto the ground.

He knew that the Book of Heaven's Path was incredible, but he couldn't have dreamt that it would be this amazing!

What Soul Depth cultivation technique or Enlightenment Jade? They were all useless before it.

Raising a person's Soul Depth by 5.0 in an instant...

Anyone who heard of it would die from shock.

"Having a Soul Depth of 3 qualifies you to take the 1-star master teacher examination. When it reaches 6, you can take the 2-star master teacher examination... To possess a Soul Depth of 5.1 the moment you reach Heart of Tranquil Water, with a good Soul Depth cultivation technique, you will be eligible to take the 2-star master teacher examination in just a few years!"

Recovering from their shock, the faces of Liu Ling and the others flushed in agitation.

When they had just reached Heart of Tranquil Water, their Soul Depth was only 1.5. Yet this fellow before their eyes had a staggering 5.1 Soul Depth. With his talent, as long as he cultivated diligently, he would surpass them in just a few years' time. In fact, it was highly likely he would be able to become a 2-star master teacher before them.

Indeed, ordinary mortals shouldn't try comparing themselves to geniuses.

"Teacher!"

All of the sudden, Lu Xun walked through the crowd and up to them.

He didn't attend Zhang Xuan's lecture previously because he was on the verge of achieving a breakthrough and had to focus all of his attention into the matter.

"How are things?"

Upon seeing his appearance, Liu Ling and the others immediately turned their attention to him.

"Teacher told me yesterday that my competitive nature and excessive concern over climbing out of my father's shadow has impeded me from reaching Heart of Tranquil Water. After contemplation, I came to a realization and made up with my father. After that, my State of Mind started to rise slowly, and eventually... I managed to achieve a breakthrough!"

Lu Xun seemed to have recovered his confidence.

All along, his State of Mind had been stuck in a bottleneck, and for some reason unknown to him, he wasn't able to reach Heart of Tranquil Water no matter how hard he tried. Initially, he attributed it to his lack of experience, but after Liu Shi's guidance, he realized that it was due to his obstinacy.

He couldn't have imagined that it was his stiff relationship with his father that had stopped him from reaching higher heights.

Reaching Heart of Tranquil Water in his twenties... He probably broke the record of Tianxuan Kingdom!

All along the way, he was firmly restrained by Zhang Xuan on all aspects, be it his cultivation, Way of Tea, or painting. Now that he had beat him in achieving Heart of Tranquil Water first, he finally felt his confidence returning to him!

Standing ramrod straight, Lu Xun wore a gentle smile.

"Have you checked it yet? What's your Soul Depth?" Hearing that he had achieved a breakthrough, Liu Ling was delighted and hurriedly asked him on that matter.

"I've already checked it!" Lu Xun chuckled softly. The exhilaration in his eyes was hard to conceal. "Teacher said that if one achieves a Soul Depth exceeding that of 1.0 upon reaching Heart of Tranquil Water, there is a 50% chance of him becoming a master teacher in the future. If it reaches 1.5, there is a 70% chance of him becoming a master teacher. My Soul Depth is..."

After pausing for a moment, he scanned their faces before revealing, "1.8!"

Placing his hands behind his back, Lu Xun excitedly waited for the astonished looks on the three master teachers' faces. After all, his Soul Depth was higher than the three master teachers when they were younger.

Yet, contrary to their expectations, they only replied with an "oh!" and turned their attention back to Zhang Xuan. Excitement could clearly be seen on their faces as they gazed at him intently.

Upon seeing him being sidelined despite his outstanding results, Lu Xun felt dismayed.

Logically speaking, shouldn't they rush up excitedly to gather around him upon hearing of his achievement and compliment him profusely?

Why were they gathering around Zhang laoshi instead?

Perplexed, he turned to look at Zhang Xuan and saw the Stone of Insight in his hand. With a single glance, he froze.

"5.1?"

Upon seeing the number, Lu Xun convulsed violently and tears spilled forth from his eyes.

The heck, aren't I embarrassing myself by coming to brag in front of you...

To think that I was gleeful for so long over this matter...

....

Xuanluo Mountain Range was a vast mountainous region. Countless trees towered and savage beasts roamed freely amid them. Without sufficient strength, it was hard to travel through the mountain range.

"I've been on this road once and it's well hidden. If you miss the turn and get lost, it will be difficult for you to find your way out of the forest!" Shen Bi Ru said with a smile as she led the way.

Zhang Xuan followed closely behind her.

After Zhang Xuan was done with the public lecture, he entrusted Zhao Ya and the others to the three master teachers and requested that they help him take them to Tianwu Royal City. Then, without much hesitation, he entered the Xuanluo Mountain Range along with Shen Bi Ru to look for the Beast Hall.

Savage beasts ran wild here; flora and fauna covered the paths. If not for Shen Bi Ru, Zhang Xuan thought that he would probably have lost his way and ended up wandering around the mountains.

After three days of traveling, the two of them felt slightly drained.

"Isn't the Beast Hall hidden too deep in the mountain range? How do they survive like that?" Zhang Xuan asked curiously.

Humans have many needs, such as socializing, food, medicine, and many other kinds of resources. Given how deep into the wilderness the Beast Hall was, it was inconvenient for them to purchase anything!

"There are aerial savage beasts in the Beast Hall. They could easily travel the distance

we covered in three days in just an hour on their beast mounts." Shen Bi Ru shook her head.

When she first followed someone else to the Beast Hall, the same question appeared in her head as well. Only after her arrival did she realize how ridiculous her concerns were.

"Besides, when you reach the Beast Hall, you will realize that it isn't too far from Beiwu Kingdom and Hanwu Kingdom. There are many people who travel to and from the Beast Hall every day, so they never suffer a shortage of resources," Shen Bi Ru continued.

In the past few days, Zhang Xuan had studied the maps of Tianxuan Kingdom and the other surrounding kingdoms in the atlas from the Kingdom's Book Collection Vault, and he realized that they weren't too far from one another. If not for the presence of the Xuanluo Mountain Range serving as a natural blockade, Tianxuan Kingdom would have long descended into chaos.

"Given the numerous savage beasts in Xuanluo Mountain, why don't the cultivators just tame one or two of them? Why do they have to go to the Beast Hall?"

There were numerous savage beasts in the mountain range and the two of them had already met with several waves in the past three days. It was fortunate that Zhang Xuan was a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert, allowing him to defeat them easily.

Since there were so many savage beasts in the mountains, the cultivators could just tame one or two for their own usage. Why did they have to go through the trouble of heading to the Beast Hall?

"I thought the same as well. Putting aside how the wild nature of the savage beasts make it hard to tame them, we haven't met a single aerial savage beast that could transport a human throughout our journey!" Shen Bi Ru chuckled lightly.

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before nodding his head.

For an aerial savage beast to transport a human, it had to be significantly larger than a human. Although they had met with numerous savage beasts in the past three days of their journey, they were mostly land-bound. As for the aerial savage beasts they chanced by, all of them were small in stature.

"Putting aside how rare these aerial savage beasts are, they are capable of escaping into the air if they find themselves at a disadvantage. As such, it isn't easy to catch hold of them! Of course, this isn't the most important factor. If you use strength to force it to submit, it is possible for it to feign obedience and sabotage you while you are riding it in the air. If so, aren't you putting yourself at risk?" Shen Bi Ru explained.

"This..."

Zhang Xuan cowered.

If an aerial savage beast pretended to submit to a human and allow the person to ride it, it could simply flip in midair and the person would be a goner.

"The reason why beast tamers are respected and why the occupation ranks among the top of the Upper Nine Paths is because they can ensure guaranteed obedience from a savage beast, preventing such a situation from occurring. Otherwise, if a savage beast reneged on its words, it could prove dangerous."

Even a Zongshi realm expert would be doomed if it fell from a high altitude.

As a result, if one didn't possess the handling of a beast tamer, it was best for one to avoid taming an aerial savage beast. Even if one were to successfully tame one, if it intended to harm said person, that person would be doomed.

"Just like master teachers, there are different tiers to a beast tamer. The higher the rank of a beast tamer, the stronger the savage beasts they can tame. Also, before becoming an official beast tamer, one has to be an apprentice beast tamer first." Shen Bi Ru explained, seeing Zhang Xuan's lack of knowledge in the field.

"Actually, Han Qiong is an apprentice beast tamer, that's why she has some connections with the Beast Hall. The last time I came here was actually with her."

"Mhm!" Zhang Xuan replied.

There wasn't much information on the Beast Hall in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, but general knowledge was still in there.

Actually, an apprentice beast tamer was similar to an apprentice apothecary in the sense that the latter had to study the medicinal properties of various herbs whereas the former had to study the various types of savage beasts that existed in the world,

their offensive abilities, habits...

Only after obtaining an in-depth knowledge about the savage beasts would one have an opportunity to tame one.

Otherwise, one might just die from underestimating the strength of a savage beast, let alone taming it.

Most of the aggressive savage beasts tended to view humans with hostility.

"Let's hurry. We're just a day's journey away from the Beast Hall!"

After exchanging a few lines, Shen Bi Ru giggled and the two proceeded onward. Before they could walk far, they heard the rustling of bushes in front of them.

Taking a closer look, it was a group of humans.

There were roughly seven or eight people squatted in a circle, seemingly discussing something. Most of them were Pixue realm, and only a twenty-seven-year-old or so young man was at Dingli realm pinnacle.

Despite being the weakest of the group, he seemed to be their leader. Every single movement of his felt grand.

"Who's there?"

Since Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru didn't try to hide their presence at all, the other party also noticed them as well. Bellowing, they immediately drew their weapons.

Now that they were close to the Beast Hall, it wasn't surprising for them to meet other travelers. As a result, Shen Bi Ru didn't panic. Stepping forward, she said, "We came from Tianxuan Kingdom and we're on our way to the Beast Hall. We just happened to pass by this area."

"You two are going to the Beast Hall?"

Upon seeing the beautiful Shen Bi Ru, the young man's eyes immediately lit up.

Given Shen Bi Ru's reputation as the number one beauty of Hongtian Academy, her looks were nothing to complain about. Even though spending the past three days in

the wild had made her look slightly unkempt, her beauty still shone through.

"We are also going to return to the Beast Hall soon after dealing with a problem. As long as you don't bother us, we can bring you two along with us!"

The young man extended his invitation.

"There's no need for that. We can head there by ourselves!"

Shen Bi Ru shook her head and proceeded forward along with Zhang Xuan.

"Hold it right there! You two can't walk through here!"

They had barely walked two steps forward when the others bellowed in unison at them. Hualala, the clanging of weapons being drawn resounded in the air.

Chapter 236

Formations

"We can't walk through here? Does the road belong to you?" Shen Bi Ru's face darkened.

Zhang Xuan also turned to look at them.

Due to his pure zhenqi, even Liu Shi was unable to see through his cultivation if he intentionally hid it. Naturally, these people couldn't see through his cultivation either.

Having reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle, as long as his opponent wasn't a Zongshi realm expert, there was no need for him to fear anyone at all. If these people intended to pick a fight with him, he didn't mind teaching them a lesson.

However, before he could say anything, the young man had already interjected.

"What are you all doing? Sheathe your weapons! Not everything can be solved through force!"

"Yes!" Upon hearing his words, the others hurriedly sheathed their weapons.

"Please don't be alarmed, we don't have any evil intentions! To be honest, I am the seventh prince of Hanwu Kingdom, Yun Tao, and I am currently in the midst of my 1-star beast tamer examination. I have already passed the first trial. As long as I can tame a Pixue realm savage beast, I will pass the examination!"

Stepping forward, the young man smiled kindly.

"The reason why my men stopped you two is because the [Gold Alloyed Panther] I intend to tame is right ahead. That savage beast possesses incredible speed. We've tracked it for ten days already, so we intend to set a trap for it here. If you walk through now, you might alarm it. If so, our previous efforts would be in vain. So please, I hope you understand! If you two feel offended by our actions, I will be sure to compensate you both after capturing this Gold Alloyed Panther!"

"Then... we'll wait for a while!"

Seeing the other party speaking politely to them, Shen Bi Ru glanced at Zhang Xuan, and upon seeing him nod his head, Shen Bi Ru agreed to the other party's request.

If others were willing to speak politely, Zhang Xuan was willing to listen to their request.

Since the person explained the situation to them earnestly, Zhang Xuan didn't mind the slight inconvenience.

In any case, he and Shen Bi Ru were exhausted after walking for an entire day, so it wouldn't hurt to rest. At the same time, he could gather some information on the Beast Hall.

"Thank you for understanding!"

Upon seeing them relent, Yun Tao nodded his head in satisfaction. After instructing for the others to continue setting the trap, he walked over to Shen Bi Ru.

"May I know how to address the two of you?"

"I am Shen Bi Ru, this is Zhang Xuan!" Shen laoshi replied.

"Oh, so it's Shen xiaojie. Pleased to meet you!" Yun Tao nodded his head, neglecting Zhang Xuan from the very start.

It wasn't surprising that he would disregard Zhang Xuan. After cultivating the Heaven's Path Golden Body, Zhang Xuan's skin had become smooth, giving him the appearance of a seventeen-year-old teenager. Furthermore, his clothes were shabby. No matter how Yun Tao looked at him, he seemed like a mere lackey.

"May I know what affairs xiaojie has at the Beast Hall? If nothing goes wrong, I should be able to pass the beast tamer examination. If so, I will gain considerable say within the Beast Hall!" Yun Tao spoke with a confident smile.

"I appreciate Your Highness's goodwill, but we only intend to rent an aerial savage beast, so we probably won't need your help." Shen Bi Ru rejected his offer politely.

As the icy goddess of Hongtian Academy, she was familiar with such pickup methods.

As a result, she immediately blocked his advances.

"Regardless, fate has brought us together, so there's no need for Shen xiaojie to be so courteous with me. Without the help of a beast tamer, it will be difficult to pick out a good aerial savage beast and it could prove dangerous. How about this: after I capture the Gold Alloyed Panther and go back to the Beast Hall, I'll help you pick out a good one!" Yun Tao said.

"No, thanks!" Shen Bi Ru turned down his offer.

"Even though the aerial savage beasts loaned by the Beast Hall are all tamed and it is unlikely for there any problems to occur, different savage beasts have different endurance levels and reaction speeds. If you don't choose a good one and meet with the attacks of other savage beasts in midair, it is possible for mishaps to happen. Shen xiaojie, there is no need for stand on ceremony with me!"

Lightly flinging his sleeves backward, Yun Tao exuded a dashing aura. His words were filled with concern and sincerity.

Regardless of whether it was her disposition or appearance, the lady before him was the most beautiful he had ever seen. He wanted to display his superiority to move the heart of the beauty.

"This..." She intended to reject him, but upon recalling that Zhang laoshi would be riding on the savage beast, Shen Bi Ru eventually relented and nodded her head. "I'll be troubling you then!"

"It's no trouble. I've been learning for twelve years now and I am well-acquainted with all of the savage beasts in the Beast Hall, be it their habits, endurance, age, reaction speed... I have mastered them all. Rest easy, there won't be any problems whatsoever! If not for our fated meeting here, I wouldn't help anyone else even if they paid me a huge sum of money..."

Upon seeing her agree, Yun Tao's eyes lit up. "A while ago, a powerful official from your Tianxuan Kingdom tried to recruit me for my services, but I rejected his request..."

Seeing that this guy intended to show off to display his strengths and capabilities, Zhang Xuan could no longer hold back. Shaking his head helplessly, he walked over to the other people.

The trap they spoke of wasn't just digging a pit and covering it with straw and leaves.

This kind of elementary level trap might work on wild animals, but savage beasts possessed intelligence. Not only would one be unable to capture a savage beast through such means, the savage beast might even feel offended and come and assault the trapper.

The Pixue realm cultivators who had come along with Yun Tao held several dark grey flags in their hands. After measuring the coordinates properly, they staked them into the ground.

'Is this... a formation?' Upon seeing their actions, a thought popped into Zhang Xuan's head.

Formation master was also one of the top occupations among the Upper Nine Paths, and their standing wasn't inferior to the apothecary job in the least. It was one of the more popular occupations.

Even though there were some records on formations in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, the information on them was terse. They only spoke of the fundamentals. As for how one could set up a formation and how one activated it... there wasn't any information at all.

After all, Tianxuan Kingdom was just a remote country on the sidelines. It didn't even have a Formation Master Guild. As such, the information accessible to it was limited.

Even though the information detailed in the books was limited, the movements of these people were aligned with the concept of formations described in those books. As a result, Zhang Xuan was able to recognize it instantly.

According to the descriptions, once a formation was successfully laid out, a unique force field would be generated. Once triggered, it would display all kinds of unique effects.

A confinement formation would trap a person, making the target lose their sense of direction and wander aimlessly within it. A hypnotizing formation would induce illusions, leaving one's mental state in disarray. A kill formation would destroy a person immediately with its fearsome strength.

This was the first time Zhang Xuan had seen someone set up a formation. He was full

of curiosity.

"Just these few flags can trap that Gold Alloyed Panther he spoke of?"

Staring at their actions, Zhang Xuan soon realized that he was unable to comprehend anything about that formation at all and shook his head helplessly.

Just like pill forging and painting, setting up a formation was an advanced skill requiring in-depth knowledge. Putting aside perceiving the effects of the formation, Zhang Xuan didn't even know what purpose those flags served.

"Zhang laoshi, what's wrong?"

Suddenly, Shen Bi Ru's voice echoed behind him. As he turned around, he saw Shen Bi Ru right behind him. She seemed to be unable to stand the other party's narcissistic talk and came over to escape.

"I'm just curious what kind of trap they are setting up!" Zhang Xuan replied.

"It seems to be a formation. There isn't a Formation Master Guild in Tianxuan Kingdom, and as such, we don't have many books on formations. As a result, I don't know too much about formations either." Shen Bi Ru also recognized it immediately.

"Indeed. For a few flags to create a powerful formation with mystical effects, it is indeed incredible!" Zhang Xuan commented.

"None of the occupations ranked among the Upper Nine Paths are simple. It is said that even a Half-Zongshi would find it difficult to escape from a formation set up by an official formation master. In fact, if they are unlucky, they might even be killed by it. Even though those guys seem to be placing the flags at random, there must be a certain logic to it!" Shen Bi Ru nodded her head.

"Yeah! I'm just checking it out!" Zhang Xuan smiled.

The topic of formations was a profound one, and without years of effort, it was impossible for one to bear any results. Since Zhang Xuan was unable to comprehend anything about it, he simply regarded it as a novelty.

"Checking it out?" Yun Tao walked over. With his head lifted high, he glanced askance at Zhang Xuan and chuckled softly, "The study of formations is profound and deep. Are

you sure you can comprehend it?"

"I am an outsider who has never studied the topic, so I don't know too much about it!" Zhang Xuan admitted. Curious, he asked, "Based on your tone, Your Highness seems to be well-versed in formations?"

"Of course!"

The edges of Yun Tao's lips curled up and a proud expression appeared on his face. "Actually, I also study formations during my spare time and I am an apprentice formation master, so I have quite a bit of knowledge about formations."

"Apprentice formation master?"

Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru stared at one another in shock.

For him to be both an apprentice beast tamer and an apprentice formation master, especially when the two occupations were of the Upper Nine Paths, Yun Tao indeed possessed the right to brag about his achievements.

"Since you don't understand, allow me to introduce it to you two!"

Seeing the shock of the pair's face, Yun Tao was delighted. With a smile, he raised his head proudly and explained, "The formation they are setting up is called [Green Wood Confinement Formation]. The core of the formation is based on the 36 Heavenly Spirits whereas the flags used in the formation are placed based on the 72 Earthly Fiends. Containing the element of wood, it gathers eight different attributes of spiritual energy... Through such, the force field of the formation is formed, and once activated, it unleashes great power."

"Green Wood Confinement Formation? Just by using these small flags?"

"Indeed! These flags are just supporting equipment. Although setting up the formation is important and the coordinates of the flags must be precise, the activation of the formation is important as well. After they're done, I will activate it. If I succeed, even though the Gold Alloyed Panther's life won't be at risk if it were to step into the formation, it can't escape!"

While they were conversing, the others finished setting up the formations.

Chuckling lightly, Yun Tao stepped forward, took out a golden flag, shook it lightly, and placed it into the center of the formation.

Weng!

With a light ring, the formation seemed to have been activated. All of the formation flags seemed to have disappeared amid the greenery, making it hard to spot.

If not for Zhang Xuan witnessing the setting up of the formation personally, it would have been hard for him to believe there was a formation here.

"Incredible..."

Impressed, Zhang Xuan was about to say something when his mind jolted and a book appeared in the library.

Turning his attention to the book, the words "Green Wood Confinement Formation" were written on it.

Flipping through it, the flaws of the formation were detailed within.

"Green Wood Confinement Formation: a wood element formation. The formation flags are made from the spotted laurel plant, and the formation contains the ability of confining and restricting the target's movements. It was created three hundred years ago by 2-star Formation Master Tao Yuan. Flaws: 17 aspects. No. 1..."

"The formation activated here is a simplified version with a total of 72 flaws. No. 1..."

After reading through the book, Zhang Xuan was taken aback. He stared at the gleeful and proud prince with a strange expression.

"Are you sure that.... this formation can confine the Gold Alloyed Panther?"

Chapter 237

Play Somewhere Else!

"Of course! I bought this formation from the Formation Master Guild at a high price. Even a Tongxuan realm primary stage expert would be trapped in it, let alone a Pixue realm savage beast!"

Yun Tao gestured grandly as he turned to look at Zhang Xuan. "Why? Do you doubt the ability of this Green Wood Confinement Formation?"

"That isn't it!" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "I just think that there's something wrong with the setup of this formation, and it might be unable to display its full strength—"

"Arrogant! Do you even know what a formation is?"

"Where did this bumpkin come from, trying to doubt the formation His Highness has set up?"

"Know your place..."

Before Zhang Xuan could finish speaking, angry bellowing interrupted him.

They came from Yun Tao's subordinates.

They had heard the conversation between that boy and their prince. This fellow, who didn't even know what a formation was, said that something was amiss about the setup of the formation...

How can you be so thick-skinned?

Do you know how the formation functions? Do you know how strong it'll be after it's activated?

Doubting His Highness's capability despite knowing nothing at all? He sure is arrogant!

"Cough cough, Zhang laoshi. We shouldn't interfere in their affairs..."

Hearing the criticism from the group, Shen Bi Ru's face reddened.

She was rendered completely speechless by Zhang laoshi.

Wasn't saying that there was something wrong with the setup of the formation equivalent to mocking Prince Yun Tao?

Even though this fellow was narcissistic, he possessed true ability. Since they were ignorant about formations, it was best for them to not get involved in this affair. It wasn't a wise decision to offend a soon-to-be beast tamer before reaching the Beast Hall.

Seeing the indignation in everyone's eyes, Zhang Xuan shook his head helplessly.

Since his kind words fell on deaf ears, Zhang Xuan decided to stay out of the matter.

"The study of formations is as deep and vast as the ocean. Since you are ignorant, you shouldn't speak of it lightly. You're lucky that I am magnanimous, otherwise I would teach you a lesson based on the words you just said. Even beating you to death would be considered a light penalty!"

Yun Tao glared at Zhang Xuan and harrumphed. Then he pointed to the formation and continued confidently, "This Green Wood Confinement Formation, when complemented with trees, will have its effects amplified. Given the bushes and trees around, this is a suitable location for the setup of this formation. Later, I will show you how impressive the formation is by capturing the Gold Alloyed Panther!"

"Sure!"

Seeing through the other party's desire to impress Shen Bi Ru, Zhang Xuan didn't linger on the topic and stood to the side.

Only then did Yun Tao nod his head in satisfaction. Just when he was about to continue bragging about the capability of the formation, a roar echoed from the front.

Then a massive figure charged out.

The Gold Alloyed Panther!

This Pixue realm savage beast was around four meters long. Its golden body was covered with green spots. Even from several hundred meters out, it exerted strong pressure onto the group.

"It's here..."

Yun Tao's eyes lit up. He immediately rushed nervously forward to take a closer look.

The Gold Alloyed Panther strolled around the area leisurely, and upon seeing the group, instinctively retreated and prepared to leave.

"Light it up!" Yun Tao hurriedly commanded his subordinates upon seeing its actions.

It took them ten days of effort before they were able to track it down. If it escaped, it would be difficult to find it once more.

"Yes!" One subordinate immediately took out a bag and lit it with an ignitable paper roll.

In an instant, a repulsive odor immediately emanated from it. The stench was so strong that it made people feel lightheaded and nauseous.

"This should be the feces of a female Gold Alloyed Panther. Upon burning it, it releases an extremely powerful smell. While it is intolerable to a human, it is irresistible to a male Gold Alloyed Panther."

Shen Bi Ru seemed to be slightly knowledgeable on the topic of taming savage beasts, as she softly explained the situation to Zhang Xuan.

Feeling faint from the overpowering stench, it was a wonder to Zhang Xuan why that fellow would be attracted to such an odor. Turning to look at the Gold Alloyed Panther, it had stopped in its tracks upon smelling the scent. After hesitating for a moment, it started heading toward the group.

As the fellow slowly approached them, the group gradually felt the pressure from the savage beast grow stronger.

Slowly, its ferocious appearance and streamlined body appeared clearly before them. Even though it was a Pixue realm savage beast, it was probably capable of warding off eight human cultivators of the same realm easily.

This savage beast was born swift, and coupled with its huge physique and fur serving as a defensive layer, it was capable of matching up to a human cultivator beyond its cultivation realm!

In other words, this Gold Alloyed Panther wasn't incapable of challenging a Tongxuan realm primary stage expert.

"Prepare to trigger the formation!"

Upon seeing the Gold Alloyed Panther being attracted by the scent and walking toward the Green Wood Confinement Formation, Yun Tao clenched his fists in excitement.

As long as he grabbed hold of this fellow and tamed it, he would be able to become an official beast tamer!

With this identity, he could stand out against the other princes. Even if he couldn't inherit the throne, he would gain considerable standing within the empire.

"Hm?"

But to his astonishment, that fellow suddenly stopped ten meters in front of the formation.

As a Pixue realm savage beast, it possessed intelligence. It could sense Yun Tao and the others were up to no good. If not for the alluring scent, it would have escaped long ago.

"Attack it! Find some way to enrage it!"

As befitting of a potential beast tamer, even though Yun Tao was surprised by its actions, he immediately reacted based on his understanding of savage beasts and gave instructions.

"Yes!"

His subordinates had already been waiting for his commands. Hearing his words, they nodded their heads. Retrieving arrows from the quivers on their backs, they nocked the arrow, drew the bowstring, and shot at the Gold Alloyed Panther.

Whooooosh!

The arrows shot through the air straight toward the Gold Alloyed Panther. Since they were specially crafted arrows imbued with the zhenqi of Pixue realm experts, the Gold Alloyed Panther felt threatened by the arrows and its fur stood on end. It immediately leapt to the side to dodge the arrows.

It might have been huge in stature, but its movements were exceptionally agile. Its speed was almost comparable to Lu Xun's when he was executing the Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps.

"Keep it up!" Yun Tao shouted.

Hearing his orders, everyone moved swiftly and arrows fell like rain.

"Roar!"

Seeing the increasing number of arrows, the Gold Alloyed Panther roared furiously. Seemingly completely enraged by their actions, he charged straight toward the group.

Weng!

In just a few paces, it stepped into the range of the formation. A light ringing sound echoed and the Green Wood Confinement Formation was activated. As though it had fallen into quicksand or was trapped in a metal cage, the Gold Alloyed Panther struggled but was unable to break out of the formation.

"So this is a formation! Incredible!"

Shen Bi Ru was impressed.

She had seen the strength of the Gold Alloyed Panther for herself, and she wouldn't have believed that a formation consisting of just a few flags could trap such a powerful savage beast within if she hadn't seen it for herself.

If she intruded on the formation unintentionally, she would be in the same plight as well.

"Looks like I have to be careful of formation masters in the future!" she reminded herself warily.

The reason why formation masters were highly respected was because they possessed

the ability to defeat enemies beyond their cultivation realm.

As long as they were given sufficient time to set up a formation, they were able to slaughter an opponent whose strength far surpassed theirs.

"Let's see where you can escape to!"

Oblivious to the dread in Shen Bi Ru's heart, Yun Tao chuckled and glanced at Zhang Xuan gleefully.

Didn't you say that something was wrong with the formation?

Look, wasn't the Gold Alloyed Panther trapped in an instant?

With his hands behind his back, Yun Tao turned to look at his subordinates and ordered, "There's no need to hurry. We should let this fellow thrash about for a bit longer so that it expends its strength!"

"Yes!"

Everyone nodded their heads in agreement as they scattered around the perimeter of the formation.

"Roar!"

While they were waiting for the Gold Alloyed Panther to expend all its stamina and tame it in a single go, a furious roar echoed and the latter charged frenziedly at the formation.

Huala!

The formation shook and the formation flags which had been concealed from view suddenly appeared.

"Your Highness, what do we do..."

Upon seeing the formation flags coming into view, a Pixue realm expert immediately turned to look at Yun Tao anxiously.

"What are you panicking for? Rest easy! The Green Wood Confinement Formation

makes use of the geographical terrain to absorb the surrounding wood elemental energy to augment its defense. The Gold Alloyed Panther doesn't have enough strength to break out..."

Yun Tao smiled confidently as he gestured grandly. Just as he was about to continue bragging about the formation, the ground quaked once more. The flags, unable to bear the impact from the charge, flew away.

Hu!

The removal of the formation flags caused the instantaneous collapse of the Green Wood Confinement Formation. With a stride, the furious Gold Alloyed Panther appeared before Yun Tao. Raising its paw, it clawed at him.

"Eh?"

Yun Tao was just bragging about his Green Wood Confinement Formation when this fellow suddenly appeared before him. He yelled in terror and fell paralyzed to the ground.

"You beast!"

"Your Highness, be careful!"

The Pixue realm subordinates immediately rushed over as they drew their weapons. In an instant, numerous swords fell upon the Gold Alloyed Panther.

Roar!

Disregarding those attacks, the Gold Alloyed Panther whipped its tail at one of Yun Tao's subordinate while smacking another two next to it with its paws.

Pah pah pah!

Yun Tao's subordinates felt a fearsome force traversing through their body as they fell backwards with reddened faces. At the same moment, they felt a sweet sensation gushing up their throat and blood spewed from their mouths.

Even though the few of them were strong, they were still incapable of combating a frenzied Pixue realm savage beast.

"Flee!"

Seeing that even his subordinates were unable to stand their ground against it, Yun Tao nearly fainted from fear. He immediately bellowed and began to run. However, at this moment, he saw the giant body of the Gold Alloyed Panther rushing toward Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru.

"They're doomed..."

He froze.

Even his subordinates were unable to match up to the Gold Alloyed Panther, and that beautiful lady was only at Dingli realm pinnacle. That ignorant lad beside her was likely even weaker. Under such circumstances, Yun Tao couldn't think of any way they could avoid their demise.

Just when he prepared himself for the gruesome sight, that ignorant lad spoke in frustration.

"Are you stupid? They're the ones who want to catch you, why are you going against me?"

Upon hearing his words, everyone swayed.

Was that lad a fool?

Speaking to the Gold Alloyed Panther like that when it was at the peak of its anger, that brat must be tired of living!

Just when everyone thought that the lad with a screw loose would die for sure, they heard his helpless voice once more.

"If you refuse to leave, I'll have to make a move... Forget it, since you aren't willing to listen to logic, play somewhere else!"

Right after saying those words, a loud slap echoed.

Whiz!

The gigantic body of the Gold Alloyed Panther immediately flew aside. Smashing into

a massive tree, white foam leaked from the corners of its mouth as it convulsed.

Chapter 238

Taming [2 In 1]

"What?"

Yun Tao and the others nearly passed out.

What was going on?

This was a Pixue realm Gold Alloyed Panther, it possessed strength rivaling that of a Tongxuan realm primary stage expert. Furthermore, its coat of fur provided it with incredible defense way beyond that of an ordinary cultivator, yet to be sent flying with a single blow and foaming at the mouth...

How strong was that attack?

They swiftly turned their gaze toward that ignorant brat, only to see him walking with a vexed expression toward the Gold Alloyed Panther. Squatting beside it, he stared at it with an expression of lament.

"I told you that the ones who wanted to capture you are them, and that you shouldn't go for me..."

Pu!

Hearing those words, the bodies of Yun Tao and the others convulsed.

The heck!

Do you have to go so far?

No matter what, since fate has allowed us to meet, we should at least get along with one another. What do you mean by those words?

Why are you persuading the savage beast to go for us?

Roar!

Hearing the other party's words, the Gold Alloyed Panther howled in anger. Struggling upright, it roared and sent its paw straight at the fellow nagging at it.

"In the end, you're just a savage beast. I've been wasting my breath trying to explain the situation to you..."

Under the anxious gazes of the group, Zhang Xuan disregarded the claws of the other party and continued nagging. Just when the claws were about to fall on his head, he lifted his palm.

As though time had stopped, the claws capable of even smashing through metal stopped in midair.

Hu!

Then, with a slight raise of the hand, the four-meter-long Gold Alloyed Panther weighing several tons was raised before being thrown to the ground. Then it was raised again before being thrown down once more.

Bang bang bang bang!

A large crater immediately appeared on the ground.

Yun Tao and the others trembled in fear. At this moment, they felt as though they were going insane.

This was a Gold Alloyed Panther, one of the most ferocious savage beasts in the forest. Possessing great might, it was usually the predator. Yet, at this moment, it was being grabbed by its paw and whipped around?

What kind of strength did that youngster possess?

"He... is probably at least at Tongxuan realm pinnacle. He might even be a... Half-Zongshi!" a subordinate of Yun Tao muttered through quivering lips.

"Half-Zongshi? I just mocked a Half-Zongshi? And I said that if I were to teach him a lesson, beating him to death would be considered as a light penalty..."

Yun Tao felt he was about to spit out blood.

Does everything has to be so shitty?

If you're a Half-Zongshi, you should've said so earlier. No matter how audacious I may be, I would never have offended you...

"Look here! The ones who want to capture you are them, not me!"

After smashing him around for a few times and seeing that the Gold Alloyed Panther was on the verge of passing out, Zhang Xuan stopped.

While others were stunned by the sight before them, Zhang Xuan was feeling dismal. He was just an innocent passerby who kindly said that the formation might not be able to trap the savage beast. It was one thing for the others to doubt him, but they had to insult him, making it seem as though he was just a kid trying to brag despite his ignorance.

As a result, he decided to stay out of the affair and allowed the others to do as they pleased. Yet.... this fellow came rushing straight at him.

The one undertaking the beast tamer examination was Yun Tao, and the one who set up the formation was him as well. Instead of looking for the mastermind, why did you look for me?

As expected of a savage beast, dumb!

"Let's go!"

Seeing that the Gold Alloyed Panther was on the verge of breathing its last, Zhang Xuan shook his head and turned to Shen Bi Ru.

"OK!"

Shen laoshi walked toward him.

She already knew that Zhang Xuan's cultivation was at Tongxuan realm pinnacle and that the Gold Alloyed Panther wouldn't be a match for him. So she wasn't surprised by the turn of events.

"You two..."

Upon seeing the two leaving, Yun Tao started walking over to stop them. But at this moment, the Gold Alloyed Panther struggled to its feet, walked forward to block Zhang Xuan's path, and lay on the floor prostrating to him. Anticipation gleamed in its eyes.

"This is... Voluntary Submission? The Gold Alloyed Panther is submitting to him?"

As an apprentice beast tamer, Yun Tao was well-versed about the habits of savage beasts.

The Gold Alloyed Panther was clearly in awe of Zhang Xuan's incredible strength and intended to submit to him.

Yun Tao had tracked this savage beast for several days to accomplish his beast tamer examination, and it took a combination of luck and effort before he was able to encounter it. Yet it was submitting to someone else?

Yun Tao experienced depression in the pit of his stomach and nearly spewed blood.

However, there was no way around it anymore. The moment a savage beast decided to submit to someone, it meant that fear had already sprouted in the depths of its heart toward its master, and it wouldn't dare to go against him. Even if Yun Tao were to use all of his means at this moment, he would be unable to change the decision of the savage beast.

A savage beast only recognized a single master in its entire life. Since it was taking the initiative to prostrate itself, it showed its intent to submit to Zhang Xuan. It was too late for Yun Tao to do anything.

"It's mine..."

Tears streamed down Yun Tao's face and he felt despondent. Even so, he was too afraid to say anything.

Yun Tao thought that the other party would be delighted to see the savage beast submitting to him, but the youngster only frowned. "Are you done? If so, scram. Otherwise, I will beat you up again!"

"Wuuuu!"

The Gold Alloyed Panther lowered his head and whimpered.

"Why? You aren't content and wish to get back at me?" Zhang Xuan lifted his leg and prepared to kick it.

"Cough cough, Elder Zhang Xuan..."

Seeing that the other party didn't seem to understand the meaning by the Gold Alloyed Panther's gesture, Yun Tao immediately stepped forward.

Yun Tao had only disregarded Zhang Xuan previously because he thought that he was Shen Bi Ru's lackey, but upon realizing that he was likely to be a Half-Zongshi expert, he didn't dare to be disrespectful to him in any way.

"Elder?"

Zhang Xuan was stunned for a moment as he didn't expect this braggart to address him like this. However, after pondering for a moment, he felt that it wasn't completely unexpected.

"This Gold Alloyed Panther has chosen to submit to you. If you're willing to take it in, pet its head, and feed it with a drop of your blood, it will be loyal to you for the rest of its life... If you decide to turn it down, you can just turn around and leave!" Yun Tao said.

He could tell that even though this fellow was powerful, he knew nothing about beast taming at all.

Otherwise, how could he not even know the submission positions of savage beasts?

"Chosen to submit to me?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Why did it suddenly submit to me when all I've done was to beat it up?

Looks like beast tamer isn't as hard of an occupation as I think it to be...

If Yun Tao could hear his thoughts, he would definitely spurt blood.

There were many methods to induce a savage beast to submit to a person, such as gratitude, enticement, overwhelming force...

Of which, overwhelming it meant defeating the other party in a battle of strength, rendering it into a completely helpless position.

The Gold Alloyed Panther possessed invincible defense and incredible speed, and with just these two, it was able to give an ordinary Tongxuan realm expert a splitting headache. However, to Zhang Xuan, who cultivated the Heaven's Path Movement Art and Heaven's Path Golden Body, its defensive ability and agility meant nothing at all.

Regardless of which it was, the Gold Alloyed Panther realized that it wasn't a match for this human. Thus, it willingly submitted to Zhang Xuan.

Even though it was simple in theory, it wasn't easy in practice.

Putting everything aside, there were no one beneath Zongshi realm who could triumph against Zhang Xuan in terms of physical ability. Even if there truly were one capable of rivaling Zhang Xuan, there was no reason for him to tame a weak Pixue realm Gold Alloyed Panther.

Zhang Xuan only thought that it was simple because he didn't understand the true underlying difficulty in the matter.

"Wuuuuu!" The Gold Alloyed Panther gazed at Zhang Xuan in anticipation.

Seeing its expectant eyes, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before asking, "Can you fly?"

The Gold Alloyed Panther staggered and nearly fell to the ground.

It was a savage beast that dominated the land, how could it possibly fly?

"If you can't fly, I don't have any use for you..." Zhang Xuan frowned.

His destination was Tianwu Kingdom, tens of thousands of kilometers from here. No matter how swift this fellow could run, it was impossible for him to reach Tianwu Kingdom without taking a month or two. It would be much faster riding on an aerial savage beast instead.

Besides, it didn't have enough strength to contribute to Zhang Xuan's fighting prowess.

In other words... to Zhang Xuan, it didn't matter to him whether he tamed it or not.

Upon seeing his hesitant expression, Yun Tao and his subordinates felt frenzied.

Brother, do you need to be so twisted?

To capture this savage beast, putting aside the dozen or so days we spent tracking it down, just the preparation phase took more than two months by itself. In the end, it ignored us and submitted to you instead. Yet, you are unwilling to accept it...

Why is there such a huge disparity between us even though we are both humans?

"Forget it, since you wish to submit to me, I don't mind taking you in!"

After a moment of hesitation, Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

In any case, taking it in shouldn't pose as any problems. Besides, having a Pixue realm savage beast also seemed impressive.

Doing as Yun Tao said, he stretched his hand to pet the Gold Alloyed Panther's head and dripped a drop of blood into its mouth.

The moment the blood drop entered the beast's body, a ritual seemed to have been triggered. A bridge seemed to be formed between his mental state with the other party. As its master, he could sense that if he were to give the order, the Gold Alloyed Panther would be willing to die for him.

Furthermore, through this bridge, he could clearly sense the Gold Alloyed Panther's will to serve him. He could also easily give orders to it through this connection.

It was no wonder that beast tamer was such a fearsome occupation. Just its ability to control savage beasts to fight alongside it was already a fearsome feat.

"Since you have submitted to me, you should serve as my mount. I'll be depending on you for the journey to the Beast Hall!" Zhang Xuan said.

However, the Gold Alloyed Panther looked at him pitifully. It struggled to its feet, only for its legs to collapse to the ground. No matter how much effort it put into its feet, it was unable to stand up.

Zhang Xuan had gone too far with his attacks previously, causing it to sustain severe injuries. As such, it was difficult for it to even stand up, much less serving as a mount.

"Elder Zhang Xuan, the Gold Alloyed Panther has sustained severe injuries. It has to recuperate for at least half a month before it is able to move around freely!" Yun Tao glanced at the Gold Alloyed Panther before speaking.

"Recuperate for half a month?"

Zhang Xuan frowned.

The reason he was heading over to the Beast Hall to rent an aerial savage beast was because he was pressed for time. After all, he didn't know when the poison aura would act up. His life was threatened as long as the poison aura remained within him.

It would be a great waste if he spent half a month here just for the sake of a savage beast he had no use for.

"You're an apprentice beast tamer. Do you have any ways to heal its injuries swiftly?"

Zhang Xuan turned to look at Yun Tao.

A human cultivator could hasten his recovery through consuming pills or circulating his zhenqi.

Savage beasts should possess similar abilities as well.

He didn't understand such things, but Yun Tao, as a potential beast tamer, should know of them.

"The physical constitution of a savage beast differs from that of a human's. However, the methods to hasten their recovery are similar. The first method is to use suitable herbs to forge a pill for the savage beast to consume. If the right pill is used, the savage beast should be able to make a complete recovery within two days!" Yun Tao pondered for a moment before saying.

"Two days?" Thinking that two days was also too long, Zhang Xuan shook his head. "What about the other methods?"

"That is the method for apothecaries, as well as the one most people resort to. The second method is a treatment method unique to beast tamers. Only an official beast tamer is capable of utilizing this method, and it is only useful for one's own tamed beast..."

Yun Tao glanced at Zhang Xuan.

Beast tamers had a unique method to treating their own tamed beast. This method required both the beast tamer and his tamed beast to practice a unique skill to boost their compatibility with one another. It would take at least half a year before the couple could utilize this method. Given how this fellow knew nothing about beast taming and his tamed beast had just submitted to him, it was impossible for him to utilize this method.

"The third method is for master teachers! Given how powerful this Gold Alloyed Panther is, it is likely to be at Pixue realm pinnacle. As long as you help it to reach Tongxuan realm, its injuries should recover in an instant."

After speaking of the second method, Yun Tao hesitated for a moment before proceeding ahead to talk of the third one.

There were only these three methods to swiftly heal a savage beast's injuries.

And each of them corresponded to the means of an apothecary, beast tamer, and master teacher respectively.

Any single one of those methods would be effective, but from the looks of it, it was impossible to utilize any single one of them now.

"Helping it reach Tongxuan realm would heal its injuries in an instant?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

For the first method, putting aside the fact he had no herbs now, Zhang Xuan thought that two days were too long a time to wait.

For the second method, given how Zhang Xuan knew nothing about beast taming at all, it was completely out of question.

As for the third method, given that Zhang Xuan possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, it was a simple feat for him to help someone achieve a breakthrough, be it human or beast.

Taking the Sky Shattering Lion for example, he had solved its trauma and raised its cultivation by a level to Tongxuan realm.

With the pleading of his grandson, Elder Shang intentionally cooked up a show to agonize Zhang Xuan, so he deserved to have his teaching license revoked. However, in order to resolve the mistakes of his previous self, Zhang Xuan had unintentionally pinned the blame of "intentional oppression of the other teachers" onto him, causing his reputation to fall into the gutter.

To make up for it, before his departure, he specially paid the Sky Shattering Lion a visit to solve its trauma.

With a Tongxuan realm savage beast guarding him, even though Elder Shang was stripped of his teaching license, he should be able to rise up once more.

In a way, this was Zhang Xuan's apology to him.

With this prior experience, Zhang Xuan knew that this method, which seemed to the others that it would be the most difficult of the three, was actually the easiest one for him.

So he turned to look at the Gold Alloyed Panther expectantly.

"Gold Alloyed Panther, try executing a battle technique... Cough cough, I mean, attack me!"

Back when that fellow attacked him, Zhang Xuan didn't try to peer into its flaws, and as a result, there wasn't a book compiled on it. To help it achieve a breakthrough, he had to understand its physical condition first.

"..."

Shen Bi Ru, Yun Tao, and the others stared at each other, dumbfounded.

What was this fellow trying to do?

Yun Tao already spoke of the three methods, yet, instead of choosing to go with any one of them, he asked the Gold Alloyed Panther to attack him...

Did he have a screw loose?

That fellow can't even stand up, yet you want it to attack you? Could it be that you hope to beat it up once more?

"Roar?"

The Gold Alloyed Panther was also stunned.

"Hurry up!"

Sensing its hesitation, Zhang Xuan urged it.

If that fellow didn't launch an attack, a book wouldn't be compiled. If so, Zhang Xuan wouldn't know what was wrong with it and he wouldn't be able to help it achieve a breakthrough.

"Roar!"

The Gold Alloyed Panther lowered its head.

Putting aside how it didn't dare to attack its owner, it didn't have the strength to do so either!

He couldn't even stand up straight, how could he attack?

"When I told you to stop just now, you continued charging at me. Now that I'm telling you to attack me, you hesitate!"

Seeing how that fellow was behaving as docile as a small kitten, Zhang Xuan was speechless.

When I told you go for Yun Tao instead, you kept charging toward me. Now, you're acting like this...

In the end, you're still a savage beast. Seems like it's impossible to reason with you.

Forget it, I'll do it myself then!

Shaking his head, Zhang Xuan walked up to the Gold Alloyed Panther and smiled compassionately. "You don't have to be anxious. Lift your head..."

The Gold Alloyed Panther raised its giant head up.

The others also turned their attention to them, curious to see what he was up to.

"Yep, right, just like that..."

Upon seeing the savage beast obediently lift its head, Zhang Xuan stretched his hands and pah! He struck the back of its neck.

"Roar?"

Not expecting its master to beat it even though it has already submitted to him, the Gold Alloyed Panther roared in resentment. Then its massive body swayed and it collapsed onto the ground, unconscious.

"What?"

The others stared at one another in so much shock that they were about to faint.

This is your tamed beast! Furthermore... I thought that you are going to treat it? Why are you knocking it out?

Ignoring the reaction of the others, Zhang Xuan placed his palm on the beast's body.

Weng!

A book appeared in the library.

Reading through it swiftly, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. He then turned to Yun Tao and asked, "That... it has fainted. How do I wake it up?"

"..."

Yun Tao and the others felt they were going insane.

When you asked about the methods to heal a savage beast swiftly, we all thought that you are going to treat it. Yet, contrary to our expectations, you struck it unconscious.

Now that everyone is trying to figure out what you're up to, you want to wake it up...

Brother, can your actions be any more irrational?

What in the world are you up to? We're utterly stumped by your actions!

"What? You don't have any ideas?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

"I do, I do!"

Stifling the urge to pull out his hair, Yun Tao hurriedly walked forward.

He was well aware of the habits of the Gold Alloyed Panther. Pressing his finger on an acupoint, the huge fellow soon slowly roused from its rest.

"Roar..."

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, the eyelids of the conscious Gold Alloyed Panther twitched. It was on the verge of tears.

"There's no need to look at me like that. Let me ask you, do you want to recover from your injuries instantly? Also, do you wish to reach Tongxuan realm?" Ignoring the resentful expression of the other party, Zhang Xuan said, "If you wish to, let's get on with it. Otherwise, I'll leave right now. You can remain as king of the mountain, and we'll treat it as though you have never submitted to me!"

If this fellow couldn't recover from his injuries swiftly, it would be of no use to Zhang Xuan. If so, there was no need for Zhang Xuan to waste his time on it.

"Roar!"

Even though it was hesitant, the Gold Alloyed Panther eventually nodded its head.

"It's good that you've agreed!"

Nodding in approval, Zhang Xuan walked over to the Gold Alloyed Panther. Then, he sent a palm strike straight at its massive body.

Pah pah pah pah pah!

The sound echoed thirty-six times consecutively, and every single strike struck the acupoints of the Gold Alloyed Panther accurately. At the same time, pure zhenqi seeped into its body and flow through its meridians.

"This..."

Other people might be confused by Zhang Xuan's actions, but as a potential beast tamer, Yun Tao could tell what Zhang Xuan was doing with a single sight!

"I thought he didn't know anything about beast taming at all? How is he able to strike the acupoints on the Gold Alloyed Panther so accurately?"

Jaw dropping, Yun Tao trembled in astonishment.

The physique of a physical beast was completely different from that of a human's. Naturally, their cultivation methods were different as well. Logically speaking, it was impossible for a person who knew nothing about beast taming to locate the acupoints on the body of a savage beast. In fact, it would be an incredible feat if they could fathom the rough locations of those acupoints in its body.

After the various incidents before, he knew that the person before him was completely ignorant of the art of beast taming. Yet... despite his ignorance, all of his seemingly casual strikes struck the acupoints of the savage beast without the slightest deviation!

What in the world was going on?

Furthermore.... what was he hoping to do striking those acupoints?

Could it be that he was really trying to help the beast reach... Tongxuan realm?

Seriously?

That's something that even an official beast tamer would find hard to achieve.

While he was immersed in shock, Zhang Xuan finished striking all of the acupoints. At this moment, the pure zhenqi he had injected into the body of the Gold Alloyed Panther was flowing unbridled through its widened meridians.

Hu!

Coming to a stop, Zhang Xuan wiped the beads of perspiration off his forehead.

Raising the cultivation of a savage beast was completely different from raising a human's.

Due to the enormous size of the Gold Alloyed Panther, the zhenqi it required for its

breakthrough was multiple times that of a human cultivator. If not for the fact that Zhang Xuan cultivated the Heaven's Path Divine Art and his zhenqi was pure, Zhang Xuan would probably have been sapped dry of his zhenqi and collapsed onto the floor due to exhaustion before he could raise the other party's cultivation.

Even so, he expended a huge portion of his zhenqi and was slightly worn out.

Crick! Crack!

A crisp sound similar to that of beans popping echoed from the body of the Gold Alloyed Panther.

Under normal circumstances, the strength of a savage beast was determined by its race and its talents. Unless its bloodline evolved, it was difficult for it to raise its cultivation.

After all, even though they possessed intelligence surpassing that of ordinary animals, they were still inferior to human intellect, and they couldn't practice cultivation techniques either.

This was precisely the reason why even official beast tamers would find it difficult to raise the cultivation of their tamed beasts.

However... Zhang Xuan was different. The only difference that a high-tier savage beast had was its pure bloodline. The Heaven's Path zhenqi within Zhang Xuan's body was capable of washing one's meridians and cleansing the impurities in one's bloodline, raising the purity.

As the impurities in the bloodline reduced, the limiter on the savage beast would be released. Naturally, its cultivation realm would be raised as well.

Boom!

The crisp sound didn't last for long. Soon, the body of the Gold Alloyed Panther inflated like a balloon, and it swiftly grew larger. From its previous length of four meters, it grew to around six or seven meters. At the same time, the aura emanated by the savage beast changed tremendously. It clearly grew stronger and even more fearsome.

Deng deng deng!

The pressure it emitted made Yun Tao and the others rapidly retreat with pale faces.

"This..."

It was clear that the fellow before them had achieved a breakthrough!

With just a few random slaps, the Gold Alloyed Panther reached Tongxuan realm?

Yun Tao felt himself grow lightheaded. The sight before him was simply too incredulous.

After staying in the Beast Hall for a significant period of time, he knew how difficult it was for a savage beast's bloodline to evolve.

Even a 2-star beast tamer, without years of effort, would be unable to accomplish such a task!

Yet, the fellow before him... was able to achieve this feat in just a few breaths?

What in the world was going on?

Yun Tao wasn't the only one. Shen Bi Ru's eyes were also completely widened in shock.

She knew that Zhang laoshi would do something completely unexpected. Even so, the sight before her still made her doubt her vision... His actions was beyond her expectations.

To induce a breakthrough in the Gold Alloyed Panther so casually...

Even the average master teacher wouldn't be capable of such a feat!

What in the world did this fellow learn from Yang shi?

Hu!

Amid everyone's astounded gazes, the Gold Alloyed Panther successfully completed the evolution of its bloodline. At the same time, its strength stabilized at Tongxuan realm primary stage.

Roar!

With its strength raised, the injuries it sustained previously also recovered. Standing up, it roared ferociously, shaking the heavens.

After which, the towering Gold Alloyed Panther walked over to Zhang Xuan and laid down. At this moment, its eyes were filled with admiration and affection, and the resentment it felt previously had vanished completely.

When Zhang Xuan struck it unconsciously previously, it was pondering whether it had chosen the wrong person to follow. But now, it realized that its master was a person of incredible means.

This time, it was submitting to him with utmost sincerity.

"Since you have achieved a breakthrough, let's set off!"

With a leap, Zhang Xuan sat on the back of Gold Alloyed Panther and gestured for Shen Bi Ru to climb on as well. Then the duo continued heading toward the Beast Hall.

Chapter 239

Strange Bird [2 in 1]

"Elder Zhang Xuan..."

Upon seeing the couple leaving, Yun Tao hurried forward.

"We're heading for the Beast Hall, so we won't bother you in your taming of a savage beast. Farewell!" Zhang Xuan waved his hand.

They were strangers, and the reason why Zhang Xuan had waited here previously was for fear of ruining the other party's situation. Now that the Gold Alloyed Panther had been tamed, there was no longer any need for Zhang Xuan to remain here.

"Taming a savage beast..."

Yun Tao nearly burst into tears.

There was a time limit to the beast tamer examination, and tracking down this Gold Alloyed Panther had nearly used up all of his time. Even if he wanted to tame another savage beast, he had to be able to find one first... Besides, even if he did find one, given how his formation was ineffective, his survivability was the problem, let alone actually taming the savage beast.

"Senior, may I consult you on a matter?"

Quelling his gloom, Yun Tao clasped his hands.

"Hm?" Zhang Xuan glanced over.

"Just now... how were you able to tell that there was a problem with the setup of my formation, and that it wouldn't be able to trap the Gold Alloyed Panther?" Yun Tao asked.

He wasn't the only one who was curious about this. The eyes of the others also fell upon Zhang Xuan, and even Shen Bi Ru's eyes sparkled with curiosity.

Based on his actions and words, the fellow before him was definitely a complete amateur at formations. Thus, it was inconceivable how he could see a flaw in it immediately.

"That's simple!" Without hiding anything, Zhang Xuan explained, "The Green Wood Formation is built using formation flags made of the spotted laurel, and requires the wood element to sustain the formation. The location you chose is lush with trees and shrubs, and is aligned with the conditions required for the formation. There also weren't any errors in your setup. However, you neglected a single detail!"

"Senior, please enlighten me!"

After musing for a while, Yun Tao couldn't tell what was wrong with his formation. As a result, he asked with earnestness.

"The mountain range we stand upon!" Zhang Xuan lifted his head to look at the various mountains in the distance, his expression carefree.

"Mountain range?"

Yun Tao was even more confused.

What was wrong with this mountain range?

When he bought this Green Wood Formation, he had tried setting it up once and there was no problem at all! Even a Tongxuan realm primary stage expert would find it difficult to overcome this formation.

"The mountain range extends from the north to the south, and is imposing and staunch. The airstream sinks and doesn't move. The plants that grow on land where soil lacks nutrients have a yellow tint, and the ridges along the mountain range have a slight shade of red..."

Sitting on the back of the Gold Alloyed Panther, Zhang Xuan pointed around to the various signs. "From this, you can tell that there is a metal deposit beneath the mountain! Of the five elements, metal opposes wood. As such, the Confinement Formation has been opposed by the metal element below, so how could it exert its full might?"

"This..."

Yun Tao trembled.

His teacher had once taught him that one shouldn't just focus on the geographical terrains. More importantly, he should borrow the strength of the environment, the might of the heavens, and even the power from the stars, harboring them within his formations.

Back then, those words sounded ridiculous to him. Yet, at this moment, he realized that... it was all true!

To be able to tell that there was a metal deposit just from the ridges and the direction the mountains extended, and deduce that it affected the Green Wood Confinement Formation... What kind of discernment aptitude was that?

Even a 3-star formation master would be hard-pressed to perform such a feat.

To think that he was bragging in front such a person a moment ago, even asking the other party if he could even understand the formation...

Yun Tao felt a burning sensation on his face.

He wasn't the only one shocked. Also seated on the Gold Alloyed Panther, Shen Bi Ru's mouth twitched and she nearly fainted from surprise.

Brother, didn't you know nothing about formations just a moment ago?

Why were you able to talk about metal deposits, ridges, airstream, and whatever else in the blink of an eye?

Do you have to be so incredible?

She felt that it was laughable how she thought that Zhang Xuan was spouting nonsense a moment ago...

"This guy..."

Recalling her previous experiences, Shen Bi Ru felt helpless.

Common sense truly didn't apply to this fellow. If she continued to stick fast to common sense, it would just be a matter of time before she was shocked to death.

"I will stop here. If there's nothing else, I'll be taking my leave!"

After explaining the faults with the formation, Zhang Xuan waved and left.

"Senior, since there isn't sufficient time to capture a savage beast now, I would like to return to the Beast Hall along with you. Is that fine by you?"

Since his examination was already a lost cause, he chose to throw it aside altogether and strike up a connection with the expert before him instead.

Regardless of his strength, his previous means to induce a breakthrough in a savage beast, or his understanding of formations, this Elder Zhang Xuan seemed to be a person with great ability. So Yun Tao deemed it beneficial for him to establish a relationship with him.

"The Gold Alloyed Panther is swift. If you can keep up, feel free to do so!"

Even though the prince was a braggart, he was a person with true capabilities. Furthermore, he was an apprentice beast tamer. With his guidance, it should be easier to find a good aerial savage beast, allowing them to reach Tianwu Kingdom faster and smoother.

However, it was already cramped for two people to ride the Gold Alloyed Panther. It would be impossible to house any more people.

"Thank you, senior!" Upon seeing him agree to it, Yun Tao heaved a sigh of relief.

"Let's go!"

Zhang Xuan instructed the Gold Alloyed Panther, and it started dashing swiftly forward.

Even when it was at Pixue realm, the Gold Alloyed Panther had possessed incredible speed. At this moment, it was no different from a swift steed. Even though the terrain of the mountain forest was rugged and littered with obstacles, there simply weren't any signs of it slowing down.

Initially, Yun Tao and company could still keep up. However, as time went on, the rate at which their zhenqi was being sapped increased as their faces turned pale. They were so exhausted from running that they were about to spit out blood.

"Let's rest for a while!"

After around two hours, seeing that the others were completely exhausted, Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru leapt from the back of the Gold Alloyed Panther.

Initially, if the duo proceeded to the Beast Hall by foot, it would take at least an entire day. However, with this fellow, they would reach in at most another two hours, so they were no longer in a rush.

"Senior!"

Knowing that the other party was stopping for their sake, Yun Tao heaved a sigh of relief. After resting for a moment and recovering a slight bit of his stamina, he walked forward and greeted Zhang Xuan respectfully.

"Given that I have tamed the Gold Alloyed Panther, does it mean that you have failed your beast tamer exam?"

Along the way, Zhang Xuan gave the matter some thought. Yun Tao and the others had pursued this Gold Alloyed Panther for several days, only for the prize to land in Zhang Xuan's lap. While the savage beast wasn't a huge deal, the beast tamer examination was. With this, Yun Tao would likely fail the examination.

"This..." Yun Tao replied awkwardly, "If not for elder taming the Gold Alloyed Panther, we might all have died on the spot. Compared to our lives, the exam means nothing at all!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

While the fellow might be narcissistic, he was rational.

It was impossible for the Green Wood Confinement Formation to trap the Gold Alloyed Panther. If Zhang Xuan hadn't been there, given the strength of Yun Tao and his Pixue realm subordinates, they would have died for sure. Even though Zhang Xuan had taken the Gold Alloyed Panther out of their hands, he had also saved their lives.

"What are the tests required for the beast tamer exam?"

After riding on the Gold Alloyed Panther, Zhang Xuan understood the convenience of having a savage beast as a mount. If he could become an official beast tamer, it would

be convenient for him to travel long distances in the future.

If Yun Tao could hear his thoughts, he would definitely spew blood.

For the beast tamer examination, he had lived alongside savage beasts for many years in order to study from them. Even so, he had yet to pass the examination. On the other hand, this fellow wanted to take the examination just because he felt that it was tiring to walk on foot...

"First, one has to become an apprentice beast tamer. There are two parts to the apprentice examination: Theoretical Paper and Savage Beast Distinguishing. Only after passing these two will you be qualified to take the beast tamer exam. Similarly, there are also two parts to the beast tamer exam. First, you have to gain the recognition of a savage beast. Second, you have to tame a savage beast," Yun Tao explained.

"Gain the recognition of a savage beast?"

"Yeah. The examinee will be placed in an enclosure with five savage beasts. Within two hours, the examinee has to gain their approval and stop them from attacking him. If you can't do so, it only means that you don't have a good understanding of savage beasts! Also, there's a requirement for the tamed savage beast. Its cultivation realm has to be higher than the examinee's."

Yun Tao explained, "Otherwise, if the savage beast is too weak, one could use brute force to coerce its submission. If so, it would be impossible to determine whether the examinee has the true skills to become a beast tamer."

Zhang Xuan nodded.

The beast tamer examination was similar to the apothecary examination.

To become an apprentice, one had to possess sufficient theoretical knowledge. And to become an official member, one had to possess practical skills.

For the latter, one had to forge a tier-1 pill. As for the former, one had to tame a stronger savage beast.

It was no wonder why Yun Tao was pursuing this Gold Alloyed Panther. At Dingli realm pinnacle, the latter was an entire cultivation realm higher than him and fulfilled the

prerequisites of the examination. Once he succeeded in taming it, he would pass the examination.

"There is a time limit of half a month to the taming of the savage beast. Just looking for this Gold Alloyed Panther has already taken me more than ten days. It is impossible for me to find another one right now. Besides, if I met one that was even fiercer than this Gold Alloyed Panther, I might even lose my life..."

Yun Tao had managed to let it go.

It was all thanks to the youngster before him that he was able to survive this ordeal. He might not be as lucky the next time.

It seemed that he would have to make thorough preparations the next time he took the examination, such that all precautions were in place.

Otherwise, if he died before becoming an official beast tamer, it would be too late for him to cry about it.

In fact, there were numerous apprentices who died at the hands of the savage beasts every year while taking the beast tamer examination.

"It's good that you are willing to let it go. However... no matter what, I feel partly responsible for it. How about this: if you wish to tame another savage beast, I can give you a helping hand!" Zhang Xuan said.

More importantly, he was interested in seeing how someone could tame a savage beast that was stronger than the tamer.

After the affair with the Gold Alloyed Panther, Zhang Xuan knew that it would be difficult to build camaraderie with a savage beast if it didn't admit defeat willingly, let alone taming it.

Even if not used for taking the beast tamer examination, the art of beast taming would prove useful in his future journeys.

After all, he couldn't possibly be so lucky as to happen to meet a savage beast weaker than him and that submitted easily.

What if he encountered a strong one?

Therefore, he wished to make use of this opportunity to see how this fellow would go about it in order to steal his skills.

Of course, he wouldn't say these words out loud. Otherwise, wouldn't the image of a "senior" he had built with great difficulty crumble in an instant?

Having disguised himself as Yang shi, he understood that the identity of a "senior" would make it easy to resolve many issues.

However, it carried risks as well. Once exposed, he would likely be pummeled to death.

"Senior... is willing to help me?"

Hearing his words, Yun Tao immediately trembled in excitement.

He had witnessed the strength of Elder Zhang Xuan for himself. If he were to lend a helping hand, capturing a Pixue realm savage beast would definitely be an easy feat. As long as the savage beast was captured, he had his own means to tame it.

"Yeah!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head with the look of an expert.

"That's great! As long as Senior is willing to help me, I will definitely succeed..."

Balling his hands into fists, Yun Tao's eyes reddened in excitement.

"Calm down first. Even if I did help you, can you find a suitable savage beast first?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"A suitable savage beast..."

Yun Tao immediately puckered his face.

He had already taken more than ten days to find a Pixue realm Gold Alloyed Panther. Even if the other party had agreed to help him, it was useless if he wasn't able to find another suitable savage beast.

"Your Highness, have you forgotten about that?"

A subordinate stepped forward.

"That?" Yun Tao was perplexed.

"The one who comes by daily to cause trouble," the subordinate said.

"That thing?" Seemingly recalling something, embarrassment appeared on Yun Tao's face.

"It's too late to find any other savage beast. Your Highness, if you can capture and tame that fellow, you will pass the exam. Right now, the priority is to pass the beast tamer exam. We can talk about taming other savage beasts in the future!" the subordinate persuaded.

"This..." Yun Tao hesitated for a moment before turning to Zhang Xuan. "Elder, there is indeed a suitable savage beast. I will require your help in this matter."

"Oh?" Zhang Xuan stared at Yun Tao curiously.

"It's a... strange bird!" Yun Tao said.

"An aerial savage beast?"

Given that Yun Tao was a Dingli realm pinnacle cultivator, and since the savage beast he had to tame had to be a cultivation realm higher than his, the savage beast he was speaking of had to be Pixue realm. On top of that, given that it was a bird, Yun Tao was probably asking him to capture an aerial savage beast for him.

All of the aerial savage beasts Zhang Xuan had passed by in the Xuanluo Mountain Range were soaring in the skies several thousand meters above them. Even if Zhang Xuan intended to capture them, he was helpless.

"It can't be considered an aerial savage beast. It is quite small in size, about... the size of a palm!" Yun Tao's face reddened.

"The size of a palm?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Based on Shen Bi Ru's descriptions, Zhang Xuan knew that aerial savage beasts were around several zhang long, and their wings were two to three zhang wide. Only with such size could they possess sufficient strength to carry a human to the skies.

To be the size of a palm... Indeed, it couldn't be considered an aerial savage beast. At

best it was a canary.

"Even though that thing is small, it is a savage beast. Furthermore, its strength has reached Pixue realm primary stage, so its cultivation realm is slightly higher than mine... It's just that its physique isn't suited for battle, so it isn't a match for me. However, it possesses incredible speed and is impossible to catch up to!" Yun Tao explained in detail.

"Small but fast? Even if you want to tame it, it probably won't be easy to find it!" Zhang Xuan frowned.

Even a large and slow savage beast was hard to find. A palm-sized, flying-type savage beast possessing tremendous speed could be hiding anywhere in this vast forest. How could they possibly find it!

Furthermore, it could freely fly about in the sky... It was probably even harder to tame than the Gold Alloyed Panther.

Upon hearing those words, Yun Tao felt a little sheepish. "It is hard to find it, but for the past few days, that fellow has been pestering us. Even if we don't take the initiative to look for it, it will come to look for us on its own."

"Pester?"

Zhang Xuan was puzzled. Even though he didn't have much of an understanding of savage beasts, he knew that they were guarded around humans. If a savage beast realized it wasn't a match for its opponent, it would immediately run away as far as possible. If so, why would it pester them every day?

"This... I happened to smash its nest. Infuriated, that fellow has been coming to harass us every day..."

Yun Tao quickly explained the situation to Zhang Xuan.

After hearing the story, Zhang Xuan shook his head, unsure of whether he should sympathize with Yun Tao or burst out laughing.

This strange bird apparently liked to consume the wild honey of the mountain forest. Unaware of this fact, Yun Tao stumbled upon its nest and took away its collection of honey. That little fellow had probably been saving up for many years before being able

to collect such a huge stockpile. Upon realizing that someone had stolen its treasure, it flew into a rage and chased the group.

However, due to its small physique, it wasn't suited for battle, so it wasn't a match for Yun Tao and his subordinates. Unable to take back its property, it had been trailing behind the group's back. At a fixed time, it would charge in and wreak havoc.

This was now the eighth day. Looking at the time, it was roughly the time for its entry.

"That fellow seems pretty persistent..." After learning of the grudge between the bird and the man, Zhang Xuan chuckled.

"How does it wreak havoc?" Shen Bi Ru asked, curious.

Since it would charge in to cause trouble at a fixed interval, given the number of Pixue realm experts they had here, couldn't they find some way to capture it?

"It..." Yun Tao's face turned as red as an apple. He coughed. "It poops when it is directly above me..."

"Eh?"

Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru stared at one another. They almost failed to contain their laughter.

It had to be said. This bird was truly eccentric.

"It always gets me, every time. After doing so, it flies several dozens of meters away to provoke us. By the time we catch up with it, it has already flown far away. Every day it torments us like that for two to four hours..."

Yun Tao was honestly speechless with the actions of this strange bird.

He had only stolen its honey, yet it was tormenting him every day to the point that he was already on the verge of insanity.

If not for his desire to pass the beast tamer examination, he would have never revealed it to Zhang Xuan. After all, it was very embarrassing.

For the great seventh prince of Hanwu Kingdom to be treated as a toilet by a strange

bird, flying by the moment it felt an urge...

Just thinking about it drove him crazy.

"Why don't you just return the honey?" asked Shen Bi Ru, her hand over her mouth.

"Eventually, I returned its honey to it. Yet, that fellow... still comes to harass me every day! It is too fast to be struck by our arrows, so I was preparing something for it after I finished taming the Gold Alloyed Panther. However, since I've failed to tame the Gold Alloyed Panther, I can use that bird for my exam instead!"

At this point, Yun Tao hesitated for a moment. "Just... that fellow is way too fast. Even an arrow can't outpace it. Capturing it... is simply too difficult. Does Eder have anything in mind?"

"I don't even know the appearance of that fellow or its speed. Even if you ask me now, what kind of plan can I come up with?" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He had never even seen this strange bird before, so how could he formulate a plan to capture it?

"Ah, right! Didn't he say that whenever the strange bird comes over to wreak havoc, it flies a dozen of meters forward to taunt them? At that moment, it would be near the ground. You can use your movement technique to dash forward to capture it!"

Shen Bi Ru suddenly thought of something and turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

She had seen Wang Ying's movement technique, and the speed of her movements was almost equivalent to teleportation. No matter how fast that bird was, it shouldn't pose a huge problem to Zhang laoshi.

"Yeah, I can consider that..."

Zhang Xuan nodded.

After his cultivation reached Tongxuan realm, the distance and number of times he could execute the Heaven's Path Movement Art increased once more.

In the past, when he used the full might of the technique, he was able to travel twenty meters in a tenth of a breath. But now, in the same amount of time, he was able to

travel forty meters.

Furthermore, compared to the past when he was only able to execute the technique once, he was able to execute it twice now.

Of course, this was when he was using the complete version. If he used the simplified one which he imparted to Wang Ying, given the amount of zhenqi he possessed, executing it twenty to thirty times wasn't even a problem.

Just, his speed would decrease significantly.

With the complete version, Zhang Xuan was able to leap forty meters in a tenth of the breath. On the other hand, with the simplified version, Zhang Xuan could only cover three to four meters. Furthermore, the burden the simplified technique had on his body was significantly lower. This was precisely the reason why Wang Ying was able to execute the technique six times in the battle with Du Lei before she felt drained.

Even so, it was still an extremely fearsome technique.

Covering three to four meters in a tenth of a breath, most people would be struck before they could react.

That bird might be fast, but it was only Pixue realm. It would definitely be unable to match up to the Heaven's Path Divine Art.

"You wish to depend on movement technique? I'm afraid that it would be difficult to do so..."

Hearing the conversation of the two, Yun Tao shook his head.

Even the most profound movement technique of their Hanwu Kingdom, [Tortoise Firmament Sonic Steps], at its top speed, was unable to match up with that strange bird.

Furthermore, there was a limit to a person's attention as well. Since Elder Zhang Xuan seemed to specialize in strength-based assault, speed was likely to be his fatal flaw. Even if he possessed a formidable movement technique, it would still be difficult for him to keep up with the strange bird. Besides, given that the other party came from Tianxuan Kingdom, what kind of formidable movement techniques could he know of?

Based on his knowledge, the kingdom's most powerful movement technique was [Illusory Shadows Nine Celestial Steps], and the technique paled far in comparison against the Tortoise Firmament Sonic Steps.

Since even executing the latter technique was insufficient to keep up with the bird, the former was out of question.

Thus, Yun Tao continued, "That strange bird is extremely wary of its surroundings. It often stays a suitable distance away so that it has time to react to abrupt changes. Given that even arrows are unable to hit it, catching it bare-handed is a nigh impossible task. I think we should make a trap similar to the one from before. Perhaps... we might stand a chance like that!"

"We have tried setting up traps before, but none of them worked!" a subordinate mentioned.

Upon hearing those words, Yun Tao nodded his head helplessly. "Indeed, we have set several traps for it in the past, but they never worked. The strange bird seems to know of the preparations we have made beforehand. Regardless of what we did, it refused to fall for our traps..."

Wuwuwu!

Before he could finish speaking, the whistling of the wind echoed from the on high. Something seemed to be whizzing through the sky, heading straight for Yun Tao's head.

"It's here!"

Upon hearing the sound of the wind, Yun Tao's complexion turned awful. Knowing that the strange bird was here, he didn't even bother lifting his head and dodged to the side immediately.

Padah!

However... he had barely taken a few steps when a stench assaulted his nose. His entire body was drenched with slimy white spots.

Without even looking, he knew that he had fallen for the bird's tricks yet again!

Smelling the stench on him, Yun Tao was on the verge of tears. Turning his head to take a look, he realized that what that had fallen where he was standing before was just a rock.

Seemingly aware that Yun Tao would dodge, the bird threw a rock first to distract him.

"This fellow is capable of strategizing?"

Upon seeing the sight, Zhang Xuan was stunned.

After hearing the story, he only thought that the strange bird was vindictive. To think that it would be this smart as well.

It was completely different from the reckless Gold Alloyed Panther.

Lifting his head to take a look, a small flying bird appeared in his sight. Just like Yun Tao said, it was barely larger than a palm. Its entire body was dyed black and its appearance was reminiscent of a crow. It carried along with it a sharp aura similar to a Pixue realm expert's.

There were many different sizes to savage beasts. Since there were beasts as huge as the Gold Alloyed Panther, there would naturally be small ones as well.

Having struck Yun Tao accurately, the strange bird was gleeful. "Caw caw!" it called before flying to around a distance of thirty meters ahead of everyone. Its beady eyes stared at the group, as though mocking everyone.

"Damn bird..."

Even though Yun Tao was infuriated at being done in by the bird again, he felt more dismay than anger.

The fellow came before they could come up with a concrete plan. Thus, it was unlikely that they could capture it today.

While he felt conflicted over the next course of action he should take, his vision suddenly blurred. A figure abruptly appeared before the strange bird, and with a pinch of his thumb and forefinger, whoosh, the swift bird was caught in the figure's hand before it could even react.

"This... is a movement technique? How is this possible?"

Yun Tao froze.

Chapter 240

Beast Hall [2 in 1]

"How is that possible?"

"Are my eyes playing tricks on me?"

Everyone instantly began clamoring.

Even though Yun Tao's subordinates didn't say anything, they shared the same thoughts as their master. It was impossible for a cultivator to capture that strange bird based on their movement technique and speed.

As the subordinate of a prince, they had seen plenty of swift Tongxuan realm experts, but the sight in front of their eyes still left them completely bewildered.

For Zhang Xuan to travel dozens of meter from their side to the strange bird in the blink of an eye, this... was way too fast!

Could a movement technique be capable of such speed?

"Could it be that... we've underestimated him? Is Zhang Xuan a... Zongshi realm expert?"

The several of them shuddered at the thought.

Even though Hanwu Kingdom had Zongshi realm cultivators, they rarely made a move. As a result, even they were unable to fathom how fast a Zongshi could travel.

However, they had heard from the grapevine that Zongshis, as a stabilizing force of a kingdom, possessed profound abilities, and their strength was so great that it was hard to imagine.

Given how this youngster was able to subdue a Gold Alloyed Panther barehanded and capture the strange bird with just two of his fingers, even if all of them were to gang up on him, they wouldn't stand a chance. Could it be that he was really a Zongshi realm

expert?

Zongshi realm... that was the strength of the old ancestors who propped up Tier 2 Kingdoms with their sheer might. For one to appear before them, not to mention, he seemed to be under twenty...

Could it be that he was actually a young master from some prestigious clans in one of the Conferred Kingdoms?

Otherwise, how could he possibly possess such cultivation and incredible movement technique at such a young age?

Nevertheless, regardless of the truth, this youngster wasn't someone they could afford to offend.

The several of them gulped in anxiety. For fear of inciting his rage, they didn't even dare to breathe loudly.

"Compared to Wang Ying... he's faster!"

Shen Bi Ru's face paled.

Even though she was prepared for it after Wang Ying's show of might at the Teacher Evaluation, Zhang Xuan's speed still managed to astound her.

If he were to utilize it against her, she would probably die from the impact before she could execute any moves.

"Caw..."

While Yun Tao and the others were shocked speechless, the eyes of the strange bird widened in astonishment.

The strange bird had properly planned everything beforehand. Once the group closed in on it or use their weaponry against it, it would escape immediately. Then, when the time came, it would appear once more to wreak havoc. But why did this person suddenly appear?

If it knew that one of them possessed such incredible speed, capturing it before it could even react, it wouldn't have dared to come over here to wreak havoc...

"Its speed isn't that impressive!"

Holding onto the strange bird, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

When Yun Tao described how arrows were unable to hit the strange bird and how incredible its speed was, Zhang Xuan thought that it would be a troublesome opponent. As a result, he used the complete version of the movement technique, but...

What the heck is this!

Like a corpse, the bird didn't even move! If Zhang Xuan knew that it would be like that, he would have used the incomplete version instead!

At this moment, his body was aching from the burden of the swift movement. If not for the fact that he cultivated Heaven's Path Golden Body, this forceful increase in speed would have caused him to spit out blood.

Even though Zhang Xuan's voice wasn't loud, those here were all cultivators. Everyone heard his words loud and clear, and their mouths twitched.

This... It's not that the strange bird was slow, but that you were too fast. The bird didn't even have the time to react, alright...

Ignoring the shock everyone else was going through, Zhang Xuan activated his cultivation technique and circulated the zhenqi within his body, easing the pain. Then he turned around and called for Yun Tao. "Come over and tame it!"

"Right!"

Yun Tao ran over. Taking out a unique rope, he bound the strange bird, disabling its faculty of flight. Only then did Zhang Xuan loosen his grip.

Seeing that Yun Tao was thinking of ways to tame it, Zhang Xuan focused his attention on him. After a while, he lost interest.

Actually, it was no different from taming a dog or a cat. He prepared plenty of good stuff savage beasts would find hard to reject beforehand to attract the other party's attention. Then, making use of all kinds of means, he tried to instill a good impression in the other party to obtain its trust.

"Normally, it would take three to four days for a savage beast to be tamed and establish a contract with a human. At the moment, His Highness is trying to gain intimacy with it. When their relationship reaches a certain point, there will be a possibility of the savage beast submitting to him. At that point, the two of them will cultivate a cultivation technique that can complement each other and boost the other's strength. In this way the taming process will be complete!"

Afraid that Zhang Xuan was getting impatient, a subordinate walked forward and explained the process to him.

"It takes three to four days?"

"Indeed, and we're talking about those that are easier to tame. As for the more powerful savage beasts, even official beast tamers would have to take a ton of effort. Beast Tamer Hu Qunxun from our Hanwu Kingdom once accompanied a Half-Zongshi savage beast by a marshland for three years to tame it. Every day, he would give it the food it favored. As time went by, their relationship deepened and it eventually submitted to him completely. This incident eventually went on and became a legend in our kingdom."

The subordinate nodded his head.

"This... can become a legend?"

Zhang Xuan was exasperated.

That beast tamer must be truly free to spend three years taming a savage beast. Zhang Xuan didn't have the effort and patience to spend that much time on such a thing.

"Indeed, strong savage beasts have their pride. Without making it feel touched or enticed, how could it willingly submit to someone else?"

At this point, fervent passion gleamed within the eyes of that subordinate. "I would be willing to spend a decade if I could win the loyalty of a Half-Zongshi realm savage beast."

Seeing the other party getting so agitated, Zhang Xuan was taken aback. But he soon understood the reason behind his agitation.

Not everyone had the Library of Heaven's Path like Zhang Xuan, so they weren't able

to raise their cultivation as easily as if eating and drinking like he did.

For most people, once they dredged up the final inch of their potential, they would be stuck at the same cultivation realm for their entire life, unable to achieve a breakthrough, only waiting slowly for their lives to come to an end.

Shen Hong, Liu Ling, and the others were prime examples. If they hadn't met with Zhang Xuan, it would've been nigh impossible for them to achieve a breakthrough.

Given such circumstances, it was natural that they would devote their efforts into other means to raise their fighting prowess.

Putting others aside, if Emperor Shen Zhui was able to tame such a savage beast as well, even if Shen Hong were to pass away, Tianxuan Kingdom wouldn't be at risk of an invasion.

Know that not only could a savage beast match up against cultivator beyond that of its strength, its longevity was also significantly greater than that of a human's.

Just by taming one, the safety of the kingdom would be reassured for a century. Let alone ten years, an ordinary cultivator would probably be willing to devote decades to something if there was a possibility of success.

After all, not everyone was like Zhang Xuan, possessing strength surpassing that of the Gold Alloyed Panther, which was well-known for its might, pushing it to the point it was utterly unable to fight back. Further, he helped it surpass its limits within a few moments.

"How long will he take to tame this strange bird?"

As he pondered, Zhang Xuan no longer felt interested in watching the taming methods of a beast tamer.

"I will help Elder ask!"

The subordinate quickly rushed over. A moment later, he returned and said, "Elder, His Highness says that he estimates it will take around two days for him to succeed with the Inceptive Taming! For the beast tamer examination, just Inceptive Taming is enough. You don't need to go through Complete Submission."

"Inceptive Taming?"

"That means that the strange bird will remain by his side. Even if His Highness doesn't bind it, it won't leave!" the subordinate explained.

"Two days of effort just for this?" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "This is too slow."

Having to spend an immense amount of effort, resources, and time just to tame a savage beast—it was much more convenient to rent one directly from the Beast Hall. Looks like... beast taming wasn't worth learning after all.

"I shall take a look!"

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan walked over to Yun Tao and the strange bird.

"Elder!"

Upon guessing that the person before him ought to be a Zongshi, Yun Tao felt even greater admiration for the other party, and his attitude couldn't be any more respectful.

"You need two days to complete the Inceptive Taming with this fellow?" Zhang Xuan looked at him.

"Yes!" Yun Tao glanced at the strange bird excitedly. "I used a special communication method which savage beasts can understand to communicate with it just now, and I offered it an unlimited amount of honey as long it follows by my side. Eventually, it promised to try living with me. The assessment will be two days later, and as long as I can provide it with sufficient honey, I should be able to succeed!"

"Caw!"

Hearing his words, Zhang Xuan turned to look at the strange bird, only to see that fellow stretching its neck and tilting its head back arrogantly, as though saying that he wasn't worthy to be in its sight.

"Isn't there any way to speed up the process?" Zhang Xuan frowned and asked.

"Caw! Caw! Caw!" the strange bird crowed.

After which, an awkward expression appeared on Yun Tao's face. "It says that Elder was too rough with it when you captured it just now, and it is still extremely angry. Two days is already a short duration. If we try to haggle with it, it will raise it to ten days or even a month..."

"Short?" Seeing the strange bird acting so arrogantly, Zhang Xuan shook his head. "I don't think so. I think it will submit within ten minutes."

"Ten minutes?" Yun Tao was taken aback. Then, he immediately smiled awkwardly. "How is that possible..."

Taming a Pixue realm savage beast within ten minutes was an impossible feat.

Even the most incredible beast tamer of the Beast Hall couldn't do so.

"It's quite simple!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head. He stretched out his hand and said, "Give it to me!"

"Yes!" Although Yun Tao didn't know what Zhang Xuan was up to, he handed the strange bird over.

Grabbing the bird, Zhang Xuan stared at it.

"Submit right now and become his tamed beast."

"Caw!"

Hearing those words, the strange bird immediately glared at Zhang Xuan unhappily, as though challenging Zhang Xuan's words.

It seemed to be saying that if Zhang Xuan wanted it to become Yun Tao's tamed beast, he better treat it properly.

"Fine, since you are unwilling to do so, you can die right now!"

Unwilling to waste his time with it, Zhang Xuan slapped it.

Padah!

Before the strange bird could even react, it was smacked onto the ground.

"Elder..." Yun Tao's mouth twitched and he nearly went into a frenzy.

Who tames a savage beast like this?

Even if the savage beast submits to you now, it might change its mind, bringing about plenty of trouble in the future.

The others were also dumbfounded.

You call this taming?

More like murder!

"Caw!"

Clearly, the strange bird also didn't expect Zhang Xaun to become violent, nearly killing it with a slap. The eyes of the strange bird turned red and it struggled to its feet. However, before it could stand up, a leg appeared above it.

Whoosh!

Like a rubber ball, the strange bird flew straight onto a massive boulder. Mouthful after mouthful of blood vomited from its mouth.

"I'll give you one last chance. Submit completely, and I will raise your cultivation and treat your injuries. Otherwise, die!"

Zhang Xuan stared at that strange bird emotionlessly.

"Caw..."

Struggling to open its eyes, the strange bird hesitated for a moment before squawking.

Hearing that sound, Yun Tao was taken aback. Then his face flushed from emotion.

"Elder... it, it agreed to it..."

"It agreed to it?"

Yun Tao's subordinates and Shen Bi Ru felt dizzy, and they nearly fainted from shock.

This works as well?

When did beast taming become so easy?

"It's good that you agreed. I thought that you were a valiant figure who would persevere until the very end!"

Zhang Xuan couldn't stand watching such a small and weak savage beast acting so cockily. If it didn't want to live, he could just send it on its way. In any case, Xuanluo Mountain Range had no shortage of savage beasts.

"Establish the contract!"

Unwilling to say anything more, Zhang Xuan grabbed the strange bird and threw it to Yun Tao.

Grabbing the strange bird while flustered, Yun Tao established a contract with the bird.

"Good, now give it to me!"

Upon seeing the confirmation of the contract, Zhang Xuan poked the strange bird, knocking it out. Then, after touching it, he passed it back to Yun Tao to wake it up.

After which, his fingers began prodding the body of the strange bird.

His fingers were swift as the wind, his zhenqi sharp as a sword.

Surge after surge of pure zhenqi gushed into the body of the strange bird, inducing an evolution.

Crick crack!

After dozens of breath, the sound of the crackling of the bones echoed. The dying bird abruptly grew larger and its aura suddenly grew significantly stronger. In a few moments, it reached Pixue realm intermediate stage.

Along with the rise in its cultivation, the injuries on its body disappeared.

"Caw?"

Sensing the changes in its body, the strange bird stared fixedly at Zhang Xuan in disbelief.

The reason it collected a large amount of honey in its nest wasn't just to satisfy its craving. More importantly, it could raise its cultivation.

Yun Tao's action of stealing its honey was equivalent to preventing it from raising its cultivation. That was the reason why it was so infuriated such that it was willing to waste its time wreaking havoc on the group every day.

Initially, it just intended to agree to the contract temporarily and think of a way to get back at that fellow who beat it to submission previously and cleanse itself of this humiliation. Yet the man who beat it up helped it achieve a breakthrough with just a few pokes.

Its cultivation had been stuck at the same level for many years, to achieve a breakthrough in an instant...

The strange bird suddenly felt that it might not be a bad thing to submit to a human...

Upon thinking so, its previously perfunctory submission suddenly became sincere. Bending its body, it respectfully lowered its head. All signs of arrogance from before disappeared without a trace.

"This..."

Savage beasts weren't as adept at deception as humans. Upon seeing the attitude of the strange bird, everyone was dumbfounded.

When other people tamed a savage beast, they would do their best to serve it like it was their grandfather. Even so, it was still possible for them to fail. Yet just by punching the savage beast, this guy had been able to get it to utterly submit to him. They were just thinking that the affair with the Gold Alloyed Panther might just have been a coincidence, but when it happened for the second time, it was clear to them that Zhang Xuan possessed extraordinary capabilities in taming beasts.

"This isn't something you can learn!"

"The first step, beating up a savage beast, isn't hard to learn. But the second step, helping it achieve a breakthrough and healing its injuries, how could we possibly do so?"

"Frankly, you might not even be able to learn the first step either!"

"Why? Isn't it just going all out to mercilessly beat up the savage beast?"

"Beat up the savage beast? It's not that simple! When taming a savage beast, you try to hold back so you don't kill it. But if you do so, the intimidation factor goes down! The reason why the strange bird submitted was because Elder Zhang Xuan would really kill it if it didn't do so! But more importantly... Zhang Xuan was able to surpass that fellow in speed! Along with his unconcealed killing intent, he induced fear within the strange bird. Otherwise, how could that proud savage beast submit that easily?"

"Now that you speak of it... it does sound logical..."

....

Even though Zhang Xuan tamed the strange bird easily, everyone knew that it wasn't something they could do if they were in his place. In fact, even official beast tamers couldn't imitate his method.

Just the fact that they had to crush the confidence of the strange bird by surpassing it in terms of speed would stop many experts in their tracks.

"This fellow has already submitted, so let's leave now!"

The reason why Zhang Xuan made a move was so that he could leave quickly. Now that the strange bird had been tamed, there was no need to remain here.

"OK!"

Delighted, Yun Tao nodded his head vigorously.

When Zhang Xuan tamed the Gold Alloyed Panther, Yun Tao thought that he was doomed for this examination. He didn't expect the other party to be able to reverse the situation in a single go.

He looked at Zhang Xuan with gratitude.

Since they were done with their exam, all that was left was the journey back to the Beast Hall. Zhang Xuan and Shen Bi Ru sat on the back of the Gold Alloyed Panther while Yun Tao and the others kept up with them with all their might, nearly breathing their last in the midst of doing so.

Tears streamed down Yun Tao's cheeks as he ran.

The other party got to sit on the back of a savage beast grandly, while he could only carry that silly bird of his while running behind with all his might.

Even though they had both tamed a savage beast, the difference between the two sure was huge...

Two hours later, a huge valley appeared before them.

"The spiritual energy is dense!"

Upon entering, Zhang Xuan immediately realized that something was amiss.

The spiritual energy within the valley was almost doubly denser than the spiritual energy anywhere else. The pores in his body couldn't help but breathe in the spiritual energy gleefully, and the brushing of the spiritual energy against his body made him feel like he was soaking in a hot spring.

One could definitely cultivate to higher realms here when compared to cultivating outside.

"The Beast Hall has set up a Spirit Gathering Formation in the valley so that spirit flowers and spirit herbs can grow. The constitution of savage beasts can improve as well, increasing the probability of them achieving a breakthrough!" Shen Bi Ru said.

The first time she was here, she was astonished as well.

For a formation to span the entire valley, and the spiritual energy to be doubled... How much would something on such a grand scale cost?

Only an organization as wealthy as the Beast Hall would likely be willing to invest such a sum!

"That's true!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head. He breathed in deeply, and felt the cells in

his body come to life.

The first 7 dans of a Fighter were 1-dan Juxi, 2-dan Dantian, 3-dan Zhenqi, 4-dan Pigu, 5-dan Dingli, 6-dan Pixue and 7-dan Tongxuan.

Putting aside the first three elementary realms of a cultivator, in 4-dan Pigu realm, zhenqi is used to nourish the physical body; in 5-dan Dingli realm, one learns to utilize their zhenqi more efficiently and raise their strength; in 6-dan Pixue, one opens up the acupoints in one's body; in 7-dan Tongxuan, one opens up all meridians, allowing zhenqi to flow through the entire body.

These 7 dans didn't require high amounts of spiritual energy. As such, there were plenty of Tongxuan realm experts in a place like Tianxuan Kingdom where spiritual energy was severely lacking.

However, without sufficient spiritual energy, it was difficult for one to reach Zongshi realm.

A Zongshi possessed immense strength within his body. Without sufficient spiritual energy and accumulation, it was impossible for one to reach that level.

Take Zhang Xuan for example. Even with Heaven's Path Divine Art, it was still difficult for him to achieve a breakthrough without sufficient spiritual energy

If Zongshi realm was an ocean, then Tianxuan Kingdom's spiritual energy was like a trickling stream. At such a pace, it would take decades of accumulation before he could fill that ocean. However, if he could use the current of a river instead, the speed would increase significantly.

Even though the spiritual energy in the air was just two times more concentrated than outside, his cultivation speed would be raised severalfold.

Looking around his surroundings, the plants were clearly much lusher and denser compared to the outside. From time to time, canaries and savage beasts would fly by, their physique significantly larger than those that roamed on the outside.

Using an analogy from my previous life, the Beast Hall is like an airport. It is built far away from the city, and those who want to go overseas and are in a rush would be forced to make the trip there!

Glancing at the numerous flying savage beasts in the air, this thought popped up in Zhang Xuan's mind.

Previously, he wondered why the Beast Hall wasn't built within the capital. Upon seeing those savage beasts, he immediately understood the reason.

These fellows were massive and ferocious, and if placed in the capital, conflicts would likely break out often with the indigenous population. This was something that the emperor would want to avoid happening.

"The Beast Hall is inside. Let's enter!"

Walking down the path in the valley, the group hurried forward.

Not too long after, a city appeared before their eyes.

Stretching for dozens of kilometers, all kinds of beautiful infrastructure could be seen. Crowds packed the street, and even though the bustle of the city couldn't match up to Tianxuan Royal City, it had surpassed most of the 2nd-tier markets.

"This is... the Beast Hall?" Zhang Xuan blinked.

He thought that the Beast Hall would be just like the Apothecary Guild, an average-sized building in the middle of the forest, isolated from the world. Yet, to think that it would be a prosperous city.

"Initially, it was only a hall. However, as time went by, traders and the descendants of beast tamers started to reside here, and eventually it grew to be the city it is today." Yun Tao explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded.

Xuanluo Mountain Range bordered numerous kingdoms, and there were plenty of people who wanted to purchase a savage beast to protect their clan or to ride on an aerial savage beast. Furthermore, the spiritual energy here was concentrated. As such, it quite normal that it would grow to such a scale.

It was just like an airport. As time went by, all kinds of industry would be built alongside the airport, attracting countless people to reside there.

It was no wonder Shen Bi Ru gave him a strange look when he asked about how those in the Beast Hall obtained their resources.

"Let's go to the Beast Hall!"

Upon entering the city, Zhang Xuan loitered around the streets, but he didn't see anything of interest. So he called out and the several of them walked into the tallest building in the dead center of the city.

As the core of the city, the Beast Hall was tall and towering. Painted caesious, it was a hundred meters tall, shooting straight into the clouds. There were two gigantic savage beast sculptures at the entrance. They looked extremely savage and fearsome, adding to the grandeur of the building.

Straight ahead of them was a dozen-meter-long plaque with the words "Beast Hall" written on it in red. It was hard to tell what was used to write it, but it felt intimidating.

"It's the blood of a high-tier beast!"

Yun Tao explained, "Such savage beasts are born strong, and even after their death, the pressure their presence exerted doesn't disappear. Using their blood for calligraphy can instill fear in those looking at it, making them apprehensive about causing trouble there."

"Mmm!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

It must be said that the Beast Hall was indeed grand in scale. Much less others, even he couldn't help but feel overwhelmed before entering.

Upon walking through the gates, just like the Apothecary Guild, a lounge came into view. A huge crowd paced to and fro, and there were plenty of experts in their midst. In fact, some of them were even lining up, and the entire place was bustling.

"That is... Pixue realm pinnacle? Tongxuan realm intermediate stage? Also... Tongxuan realm pinnacle?"

Looking around, Zhang Xuan was astounded.

In Tianxuan Kingdom, Tongxuan realm experts were rare and highly-esteemed, but here, like cabbages in a market, they were everywhere. In fact, even the most

unimpressive looking elder could very likely possess the cultivation of a Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

On the other hand, Pixue realm experts, who were qualified to become the head of a clan, seemed to be insignificant figures here. Just by sweeping in the surroundings, Zhang Xuan was able to spot a handful of them.

Chapter 241

I Tamed a Bird [2 in 1]

"Stop arguing. The ten slots to Hanwu Kingdom's Sebei City has been filled up. If you wish to head there, come back tomorrow!"

"We still have three empty seats for Jibei City of Anyuan Kingdom! Hurry up, before it is too late!"

"The youngling of the Tongxuan realm savage beast Red-tailed Fox is for sale here. Interested buyers, take this opportunity..."

....

All kinds of ruckus and noise could be heard from the crowd ahead.

"Xuanluo Mountain Range borders ten kingdoms. Beiwu Kingdom, Hanwu Kingdom, Tianxuan Kingdom.... All of them travel here to trade. Everyday, plenty of people visits the Beast Hall, especially those who wish to travel long distances. However, given the limited number of savage beasts in the entire Beast Hall and the huge traveling crowd, it is impossible for the supply to meet demand. Thus, one has to queue in advance; a few had waited for several weeks, but are still unable to get a seat!"

Watching the bustle, Yun Tao explained.

"They were unable to get seats even after several weeks?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Zhang Xuan had already guessed that it was impossible for the Beast Hall to possess sufficient savage beasts to meet the demand, but he hadn't expected such a queue.

Compared to waiting here for several weeks, it might be faster for him to just ride the Gold Alloyed Panther to Tianwu Kingdom instead.

"Elder, don't worry!" Upon seeing his expression, Yun Tao chuckled. "Once I complete the examination and become an official beast tamer, I be able to request an aerial

savage beast for elder immediately so that you won't have to wait like the others!"

Hearing his words, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Most occupations gave privileges to their own members.

For example, apothecaries are given preference and a discount in purchasing pills.

The Beast tamer occupation is no different.

Others would have to queue and pray to get a slot in order to ride a savage beast. But it is a different story for official beast tamers. They are allowed to skip the normal queue and directly access any savage beasts, thus saving time.

"Then.... let's go complete your examination!"

Upon witnessing the incredible queue, Zhang Xuan felt his goosebumps rise. Thus, he immediately turned to Yun Tao and said.

"Un, the examination site is over here!" Yun Tao led the way.

On their journey there, the passers-by would step aside immediately upon seeing Zhang Xuan's tall and ferocious Gold Alloyed Panther.

At this moment, the Gold Alloyed Panther had already withdrawn the sharp aura it had exuded after reaching Tongxuan realm. Thus, at this moment, other than its massive size, it wasn't too different from how it was before. At first glance, others would simply think that it was still at Pixue realm.

However, even if it were just a Pixue realm savage beast, no one was willing to get on its bad side. It wasn't because of the strength of the savage beast, but because they were in the Beast Hall. A person who was able to bring such a huge savage beast around must have connections around. He would either be an apprentice or a beast tamer, and regardless, both aren't people they could offend.

Thus, without anyone obstructing the way, they proceeded swiftly through the Beast Hall. Before long, they arrived before a massive room with the words 'Beast Tamer Examination' hung outside.

In comparison to the apothecary examination hall, the room was much wider.

"There's quite some time before the examination ends. Let's first enter and take a seat!"

Thinking that he would be able to become an official beast tamer soon, Yun Tao's eyes gleamed with exhilaration. With a bright smile, he lifted his feet and walked toward the room.

"Isn't that Yun Tao? Why are you back so quickly? Is it because you have given up on the examination and decided to come back alone?"

A voice with a mocking tone rang out of a sudden.

Turning his head to take a look, it was a young man, who led several subordinates and a gigantic Tiger Head Beast, strutting in their direction.

The Tiger Head Beast was larger in size than the Gold Alloyed Panther and the aura it emanated was much more fearsome. It felt as though it was capable of tearing apart the heavens.

Nevertheless, it was still lacking in its cultivation, being just Pixue realm primary stage.

"This is the sixth prince of Beichen Kingdom, Zhu Jinhuang. He has always been at loggerheads with our prince...."

Sensing Zhang Xuan's confusion, Yun Tao's subordinate whispered to Zhang Xuan.

"Beichen Kingdom?"

A book about the geography and containing maps appeared in Zhang Xuan's mind.

Just like Hanwu Kingdom, Beichen was also a Tier 2 Kingdom. As they were close neighbors, there was constant friction between the two countries, and they could be considered as rivals. Belonging to the royal family of each kingdom, it was natural that they would view one another with hostility.

"Actually, their grudge isn't.... because of their country's background, but...."

Before Yun Tao's subordinate could finish his words, footsteps rang and another group approached.

"Jinhuang, how can you say so? Don't you see that Gold Alloyed Panther behind him? With such a huge fellow, he will surely pass the examination!" A white-robed young man chuckled softly. But then, he frowned and continued, "Just that.... Doesn't it seem that the Gold Alloyed Panther isn't intimate with him? It can't be that it isn't his tamed beast!"

It sounded as if he was here to absolve Yun Tao from his awkward situation, but his lips were curled up in ridicule.

"This is the ninth prince of Qianyuan Kingdom, Zhou Xuan. He isn't on good terms with our prince as well...." Yun Tao's subordinates continued explaining.

Qianyuan Kingdom was also a Tier 2 Kingdom, and it wasn't too far from the Beast Hall. However, it was on the opposite side of the Xuanluo Mountain Range from Tianxuan Kingdom, closer to Tianwu Kingdom.

"Oh, I only noticed it now that you spoke of it!"

Glancing at the Gold Alloyed Panther who was intimate with another unknown youngster instead of Yun Tao, Zhu Jinhuang chuckled, "Yun Tao, it can't be that you failed to tame a savage beast and found someone to borrow one in your stead? If that's the case, I advise you to be careful. If the Beast Hall were to find out about this matter, you will be barred from the examinations for life. By then, you can only leave obediently!"

There were clear rules in the Beast Hall, and if a beast tamer used another person's savage beast for the examination, once found out, that person would be barred from the beast tamer examination for life. In other words, he would never become an official beast tamer.

As fellow apprentice beast tamers, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang possessed superb eye of discernment as well. With a single glance, they were able to tell that the Gold Alloyed Panther was only close to Zhang Xuan. Clearly, it wasn't Yun Tao's tamed beast.

"Hehe, once he fails that examination, I would like to see how he dares to continue pursuing Mo Yu xiaojie!" Zhou Xuan said.

"Pursue? He should be escape as far as he can! Given the incredible talents Mo Yu xiaojie possesses, someone like him will never match up to her!" Zhu Jinhuang harrumphed coldly.

"Me, unqualified? None of you are any better than me, so stop making a fool out of yourselves here. Why don't you pass the beast tamer examination before spouting such nonsense?" Seeing the two of them ganging up against him, Yun Tao flung his sleeves furiously.

"Is that so? You seem quite confident! We'll see how you cry later on then. It is not just about passing the beast tamer examination, I would like to see what grade you are capable of obtaining!"

Zhou Xuan said.

"Worry for yourself! I'm afraid that you won't even obtain a grade-3!" Yun Tao said.

"You...." Zhou Xuan narrowed his eyes. "I hope that you can continue being that confident after the examination."

"Hmph!"

The trio stared at one another in hostility, none of them seeming to possess the intention to back out.

Hearing their words, Zhang Xuan understood the situation immediately. Their rivalry wasn't because of their countries, but a lady named Mo Yu.

"Mo Yu xiaojie is a famous genius among the apprentice beast tamers. Currently, she's undergoing the beast tamer examination along with all of the princes. Due to her beauty and capability, these princes, hailing from different countries, are all infatuated with her, and they fight secretly in the shadows, hoping to gain her favor...."

Yun Tao's subordinate told Zhang Xuan via zhenqi transmission.

Upon knowing the reason, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

As princes, they were thought to be disputing over territories or such. To think that it would be because of a woman.

"It's Mo Yu xiaojie!"

"Quick, look at that savage beast behind her...."

"How incredible!"

....

The trio were in a glaring at one another when a commotion broke out and a slim figure slowly walked over.

Behind her, a towering eagle followed. Steel-backed with golden wings, its eyes were sharp as though lightning, causing its viewers to put on their guards subconsciously.

"A Tongxuan realm savage beast?" Zhang Xuan's expression turned grim.

This eagle has reached the strength of a Tongxuan realm advanced stage, and it is much stronger than his Gold Alloyed Panther.

Furthermore, vaguely, Zhang Xuan could feel something reminiscent of a storm within its aura. Most probably, the eagle possesses speed comparable to the strange bird previously, exceeding it even.

"Mo Yu xiaojie!"

Upon seeing the figure, Yun Tao, Zhu Jinhuang, and Zhou Xuan's eyes lit up. They hurried to welcome her.

"So this person is Mo Yu?"

Only after examining the eagle did Zhang Xuan's gaze finally land on the slim figure in front.

Around twenty-three or twenty-four-year-old, she was dressed in a light green robe which displayed her beautiful figure perfectly. Her lustrous hair which trailed down to her slim waist, coupled with her white smooth skin made her a unique beauty.

In terms of her beauty, she was in no way inferior to Shen Bi Ru. In fact, she wasn't too far from Zhao Ya after triggering the ten percent of the Pure Yin Body Constitution.

While she was beautiful, she had an extremely cold expression. Toward Yun Tao and the others, she disregarded them altogether.

"As expected of Mo Yu xiaojie, your skills are indeed incredible!" Zhu Jinhuang walked

up to her with a smile. "A Tongxuan realm Viridescent Eagle, probably you are the only one who is capable of taming it. I'm impressed!"

"Of course, it's just a mere Viridescent Eagle. Any savage beast would be willing to submit to Mo Yu xiaojie immediately!"

Zhou Xuan chuckled.

Toward the flattery of the two, Mo Yu xiaojie simply glanced at them impassively. Gazing about, she saw Shen Bi Ru and froze for a moment. Then, she walked over.

"You came here to take the beast master examination? What about Han Qiong? Is she here?"

Her voice was crisp and moving, but it felt distant and foreign.

"She didn't come. I came here with another friend." Shen Bi Ru pointed at Zhang Xuan.

Mo Yu xiaojie glanced at Zhang Xuan casually before turning away, as though his presence meant nothing at all. Without saying anything, she walked into the room.

Even though they had been disregarded, Zhu Jinhuang and the others didn't seem displeased at all. They hurriedly followed her in.

"You two know each other?" Unbothered with Mo Yu xiaojie's disregard, he turned to look at Shen laoshi doubtfully.

"I met her with I was here with Han Qiong the previous time." Shen Bi Ru nodded her head.

"Is she really just a talented apprentice beast tamer?" Zhang Xuan asked.

No matter how beautiful that lady was and how talented she was in beast taming, it shouldn't be possible for the princes of three great kingdoms to be fawning on her like that.

Regardless of whether it was Beichen, Qianyuan, or Hanwu, as Tier 2 Kingdoms, they should have a sizeable number of beast tamers in their country. As she is a mere apprentice, there was no reason for the princes to talk to her so subserviently.

In a Tier 2 Kingdom, not even a master teacher apprentice has such standing.

Along with the rise in the tier of the kingdom, the stronger the monarchy becomes. Unless one is a high-tier member of his occupation, he would simply be disregarded by the royal family. Only in small countries like Tianxuan Kingdom would an emperor treat a master teacher apprentice with utmost respect.

"Indeed, she isn't a mere apprentice beast tamer. I've heard Han Qiong speak of it once, she possesses another identity.... The third princess of Tianwu Kingdom!" Shen Bi Ru pondered for a moment before replying.

"The third princess of Tianwu Kingdom?" Zhang Xuan finally understood the reason.

This is more like it.

As a Tier 1 Kingdom, Tianwu Kingdom is the dominant power among the surrounding twelve kingdoms.

As a princess of Tianwu Kingdom, Mo Yu's identity is much more noble than the royal family of those smaller kingdoms. If they were to marry her, as the prince consort, they would gain a powerful backing in their fight for the throne in their kingdoms.

It seems that Zhu Jinhuang, Zhou Xuan, and Yun Tao all have the same idea in mind.

However, the fact that she was a princess didn't matter at all to Zhang Xuan.

In Zhang Xuan's view, one should rely on himself. Power granted by others is illusory.

The duo walked into the room as they spoke.

Contrary to the situation outside, there were only a few people in the room.

"All four of us taking the examination are back. Who do you think will be the one to assess us?"

"Of course it will be the Hall Master! As a 2-star beast tamer, he is the most capable beast tamer in the Beast Hall. Usually, he's the one who acts as the examiner."

"That's true. I've heard that the Hall Master is extremely strict in his assessment, I wonder if that's the case."

"Regardless, our prince has already tamed a savage beast and fulfilled the passing criteria. There should be no problem becoming a 1-star beast tamer."

....

Upon walking into the room, Zhang Xuan heard some hushed discussions.

The three princes have each brought a few of their subordinates along, while Mo Yu xiaojie came on her own. Standing by the side, the cold aura she emanated discouraged anyone from approaching her.

"Judging from her tone early, is there a conflict between her and Han laoshi?"

Seeing how the third princess of Tianwu Kingdom didn't bring along a single servant and her cold behavior, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled the conversation between her and Shen Bi Ru. Thus, he asked.

"It can't actually be considered as a conflict. As an apprentice beast tamer, Han laoshi also once stayed at the Beast Hall for a period of time. As they're both beauties, they were often compared to each other and as time went by, they became rivals. Just that, I didn't expect her to take the beast tamer examination so quickly. She is indeed talented."

Shen Bi Ru's astonishment was clear to see.

"Talented?" Zhang Xuan was puzzled.

She is talented just because she took the beast tamer examination?

"Looks like you don't know of it. This Princess Mo Yu has barely learned beast taming for a year!" Shen Bi Ru said.

"Barely for a year? Then she's indeed talented!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Even though Zhang Xuan didn't have much of an understanding of beast taming, he was a certified apothecary. Given that both occupations were around the same ranking in the Upper Nine Paths, beast taming was likely to be a highly difficult occupation as well.

To become an apprentice, and even undergo the beast tamer examination when she

has barely learned for a single year, she was indeed a fearsome genius.

"More importantly.... she is also a 1-star apothecary! Furthermore, she isn't far from reaching 2-star! On top of that.... she's also a master teacher apprentice. It's said the reason why she came here to learn beast taming is train her mental fortitude. Once her preparations are done, she can take the 1-star master teacher examination upon returning to her land."

Shen Bi Ru said.

"1-star apothecary? Master teacher apprentice?"

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Even though she shared a similar situation to him, Zhang Xuan knew that the other party was much more talented than him.

Luck played a big part in why Zhang Xuan could become a 1-star apothecary. Furthermore, he had relied greatly on the power of the Library of Heaven's Path. With his current pill forging proficiency, he can only formulate some basic powder, and forging pills is still way out of his reach.

To successfully become a 1-star apothecary through her very own capabilities at such a young age, and not to mention, having become a master teacher apprentice, it was no wonder why others would call her a genius. She was indeed worthy of the title.

While the two was speaking, an elder walked in.

"Silence. I'm in charge of assessing you today!"

Upon seeing the elder, everyone was taken aback.

"Beast Tamer Hong? Why is he the one in charge of the assessment?" Yun Tao was stunned. "Usually, the Hall Master would be the one who conduct the assessment. Furthermore, the rules state that a 2-star beast master must be present at the assessment. Even though Beast Tamer Hong possess a high standing within the Beast Hall, he's still at 1-star pinnacle.... He isn't yet qualified to conduct an assessment."

Seeing the doubt on everyone's faces, Beast Tamer Hong said, "The Hall Master and the other elders have something else to attend to, so today, I'll be conducting the

assessment in their place! I will follow the steps strictly and I won't condone any bribery or cheating, so there's no need to worry at all. Besides, there are Record Crystals all around, and as long as you fulfill the criteria, you will pass the examination and become a member of the Beast Hall."

"Yes!"

Everyone nodded in assent.

Regardless of whether it was for the apothecaries or the beast tamers, all examinations would require Record Crystals to be ready so that the proceedings can be checked on if something turns out to be amiss.

With this object present, no one would dare to cheat.

"Those here are apprentice beast tamers who have passed the first examination. I believe everyone is well aware of the content of the second examination and the structure it takes, but for the sake of formalities, I shall mention them once more."

Beast Tamer Hong glanced at the surroundings, "The test requires you to tame a savage beast who's stronger than you. Even though an Inceptive Taming would be sufficient, different grades can be awarded."

"The higher the cultivation of the savage beast compared to you, and the more loyal the savage beast is, the higher your grade."

"There are 3 grades, namely grade-1, grade-2, and grade-3. The higher one's grade is, the better one's results are. I believe that no one here has any disagreements to my words, right?"

"Yes!" Yun Tao and the others nodded hurriedly.

"Alright, I'll start the examination then. First, Zhou Xuan!" Beast Tamer Hong glanced at Zhou Xuan.

"Yes!" Zhou Xuan stepped forward.

"What did you tame?" Beast Tamer Hong asked.

"Reporting to Beast Tamer Hong, I tamed that Whistling Fang Wolf! It is a Pixue realm

primary stage savage beast." Zhou Xuan pointed to the side, and his subordinates immediately brought a three-meter long wolf over.

The huge wolf has gray fur, and within its mouth, sharp fangs could be seen. Just by its outer appearance itself, one could almost see how it would brutally tear apart its prey.

"Un!"

Nodding his head, Beast Tamer Hong retrieved and passed a crystal ball.

"This is a Heart Inquisition Crystal which tests a savage beast's loyalty. A number will appear on it, and for Inceptive Taming, the Loyalty Level would range between 15 to 30. The higher the number, the better the grade."

"Heart Inquisition Crystal?"

Looking at the object, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Back then, during the Enlightenment Will Trial, that was the object which was used to test Liu Yang's Trust Level.

It seems that the object is more than capable of testing a human's trust; it is able to gauge a savage beast's loyalty as well.

But on further contemplation, it made sense. Since it was able to induce life-like illusions in one's head upon contact, the Loyalty or Trust Level shown should be extremely accurate.

Just like the test of Trust Level, Zhou Xuan first dripped a droplet of blood on it before communicating with his savage beast.

Soon, a number slowly floated into appearance on the crystal——20!

"For its Loyalty Level to reach 20 within less than half a month, you have passed the Inceptive Taming prerequisites. Not bad, I'll give you a grade-2!"

Upon seeing the numbers, Beast Tamer Hong stroked his beard in approval.

To find a savage beast, tame it, and raise its Loyalty Level to this point within half a month, the other party is definitely qualified to become a 1-star beast tamer.

"His Highness is indeed impressive!"

"It has been long since anyone has been given a grade-2 in the Beast Hall!"

"Indeed, this is incredible!"

Upon hearing his results, discussions immediately broke out below.

For the beast tamer examination, grade-3 was already considered as a pass. Those who reached grade-2 were considered as geniuses among the new beast tamers.

"Grade-2, not bad. However, I won't lose to you!"

Not expecting Zhou Xuan's results to be so good, Zhu Jinhuang was stunned. However, he soon smiled and walked over.

It didn't take long for the results to be out. That Tiger Head Beast of his also had a Loyalty Point of 20 or so, and he was deemed to be at grade-2 as well.

"It's Mo Yu xiaojie's turn!"

"Mo Yu xiaojie tamed an aerial savage beast, which is much harder to tame than any other savage beast. Furthermore, it is at Tongxuan realm, so the additional points she receive should be great!"

"You're right. I think her result will probably exceed that of a grade-2."

"It has been thirty years since the last grade-1 result in the Beast Hall. Do you think that the record will be broken today?"

....

Seeing Mo Yu xiaojie walk up, everyone's anxious gazes immediately fell on her.

To be given a grade-1 ranking in the beast tamer examination is equivalent to forging a pill reaching Perfection in the apothecary examination.

Such a beast tamer will be highly valued by the Beast Hall. All kinds of resources would be invested into grooming her.

It was already an incredible feat for Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang to receive a grade-2, but Mo Yu xiaojie was clearly much more skilled than them. Everyone was curious to see if history could be created today.

Disregarding the commotion, Mo Yu xiaojie calmly walked forward. With a beckon, the massive Viridescent Eagle slowly paced forward as well.

Repeating the same actions as the two before her, she soon completed the assessment.

Loyalty Level, 40!

"Grade-1! This result definitely warrants for a grade-1!"

The room immediately burst into commotion.

Even though everyone has already guessed that Mo Yu xiaojie would likely receive a grade-1 ranking, they were still shocked when it came.

"Hehe, Yun Tao, it's your turn. We're all grade-2, and Mo Yu xiaojie has achieved a grade-1. You spoke so arrogantly previously, so I think it should be impossible for you to show us a grade-3. If I were to get a grade-3, I would be so embarrassed that I would hole myself up in my room!"

Seeing that it was Yun Tao's turn, Zhu Jinhuang sneered.

"I think Brother Zhu is overestimating him. Putting aside grade-3, I think that.... passing the examination may already pose a problem to him!" Zhou Xuan harrumphed coldly.

"This Gold Alloyed Panther isn't his, so where's the savage beast he tamed?"

"That's true, it can't be that he hadn't tamed any savage beast?"

"If that's the case, it means that he has already failed...."

The two of them spoke loudly, and their words immediately created an uproar.

Even Mo Yu xiaojie couldn't help but frown.

"Silence!"

Waving his hand and silencing the discussions, Beast Tamer Hong turned to look at Yun Tao doubtfully, "What did you tame? Is it that Gold Alloyed Panther?"

"That's not it, the panther was tamed by Elder Zhang Xuan...."

Yun Tao scratched his head awkwardly, "I.... tamed a bird!"

"A bird" is a chinese pun, and it also can be interpreted as 'The heck that I have tamed anything'.

It is an offensive way of replying another person's question.

Chapter 242

Failing the Examination!

You tamed a bird?

Upon those words, the bustling room turned quiet all of the sudden.

Everyone covered their mouths in shock as they turned to look at Yun Tao.

Are you trying to insult someone here, or are you giving up on yourself because you failed to tame anything?

It can't be that this fellow had been scared silly seeing the others before him receiving grade-1 and grade-2 results.

"Tamed a bird? The heck, why don't you say you tamed a hammer! To dare to speak to Beast Tamer Hong like that, you sure are brazen!"

"This is no longer a problem about being brazen or not, there's something wrong with his head! If he tamed a bird, I tamed a ball!"

"If that's the case, then I tamed a chili padi.... Actually, all of us have something we tamed, so shouldn't we take the beast tamer examination as well?"

....

A moment of silence, and the room burst into laughter.

The heck.

Ever since the establishment of the Beast Hall, this is the first time someone failed to tame anything and declared it so proudly. This is a new high for crudeness.

If you don't have anything to show, why are you here?

Still saying that you tamed a bird....

A bird your head!

Can you be anymore audacious?

"Haha, Yun Tao. All along, I thought that you are an incredible figure. To think that you didn't let me down.... To tame nothing at all and speak of it so proudly and brazenly, I'm impressed!" Zhu Jinhuang was almost getting cramps from laughing.

Is this fellow a retarded?

If he tamed nothing at all, the most that could happen is a failure. To tell Beast Tamer Hong that he tamed a bird.... Is he looking for some thrill?

Beast Tamer Hong may not be the best beast tamer in the Beast Hall, but he is known for being austere. To spout such brazen words... he is clearly challenging his authority!

"You truly are courting death...." Zhou Xuan laughed.

To think that he thought of this man as a competitor. At this moment, he felt that he had undermined his own worth by having even thought such.

He was worried that this fellow would awe everyone with his capability.... He did awe everyone, with his audacity, that is.

"Hmph!"

With her hands behind her back, Mo Yu xiaojie raised her impeccable face and snorted.

Even if Yun Tao didn't tame anything this time, he could try again the next time. But with such an immature attitude, no matter how talented he was, he would never become anyone great.

While everyone else roared in laughter, Beast Tamer Hong almost died from anger. His hair stood on its ends as he gritted his teeth, "What did you say?"

As a reputable beast tamer of the Beast Hall, this was the first time he had been provoked in such a manner.

Bird your head!

Come, why don't you show it to me right now?

If you can't, why don't I take yours away and kick it like a ball?

"I mean.... I tamed a bird, a strange bird!"

Only now did Yun Tao realize that he has misspoke. He quickly explained and whistled. Wuuu, the strange bird flew into view.

From the instant they reached the Beast Hall, this fellow had been flying around freely, and no one noticed its presence.

Savage beasts are usually three to four-meter big, and even the smallest ones are around a human's height. Given that the bird was only a palm's size, if one didn't look at it carefully, he would only think that it was a canary or a wild bird. No one would dare to think that it was an aerial savage beast.

Furthermore, even if they had considered this possibility, they would have found it unbelievable.

The purpose of taming savage beasts is to aid one in his battles. Even the worst beasts could be used as a method of transportation. Given the miniature size of this fellow, what could it do?

Honestly speaking, it wouldn't even be sufficient to fill one's stomach.

"You call this a savage beast?"

"Are you sure you didn't take it from some random bird cage?"

"What the heck is this? I thought you were just joking. To think that you've really tamed a bird! But, what is the use of this bird? To play with?"

Seeing that Yun Tao had really just tamed a bird, the room was silent for a moment before bursting into laughter once more.

Look at the Viridescent Eagle which Mo Yu xiaojie had tamed. It is also a bird, but it is mighty and exudes majesty! Yet, yours is just nothing but hilarious!

You should know that you are here for the beast tamer examination! Those who don't

know what's going on might just think that you are in a market putting on a circus show.

"Is this the savage beast that you tamed?"

Beast Tamer Hong's complexion didn't recover just because he saw the strange bird. With a steeled face, he asked coldly.

"Yes!" Yun Tao replied.

"According to the rules of the Beast Hall, in the second test, one has to tame a savage beast which is stronger than himself. This little bird can be killed with just a slap. Yet, you brought it here for me to assess.... Are you joking with me?"

Beast Tamer Hong tried to hold back his anger.

"I am not joking!" Sensing the bizarre tone in the other party's voice, Yun Tao hurriedly explained. "This strange bird may be small, but it's not weak. It possesses incredible speed which even Pixue realm experts are unable to catch up to. It must be a kind of savage beast...."

Pah!

Before he could finish his words, Beast Tamer Hong slammed the table and stood up. His eyebrows shot up and his cheeks were trembling.

"Audacious! Yun Tao, do you think that this is your Hanwu Kingdom? Do you think this is a place you can fool around at? Beast taming isn't a joke! You passed the first test with outstanding results, so I thought that you would be able to achieve amazing results in the second one. But.... you chose to commit such a preposterous actions instead!"

"As a Dingli realm pinnacle cultivator, even if you can't tame some of the stronger savage beast, a Pixue realm primary stage should be no problem for you. To tame a small bird and put on a show here, further claiming that it has incredible speed and that it must be a type of savage beast, do you think that I'm blind?"

"To dare to challenge an examiner directly in the beast tamer examination, bringing a wild bird here for assessment.... Who gave you such guts to commit such audacious actions?"

Infuriated, Beast Tamer Hong waved him away with unquestionable authority, "Scram! You failed your second test. If you wish to take the examination, come again next year!"

"Beast Tamer Hong! This.... This strange bird is really a savage beast with cultivation above that of Pixue realm, even I am not an opponent for it...."

Not expecting Beast Tamer Hong to fly into such a temper and proclaiming his failure, Yun Tao went pale. He hurriedly explained.

"Aren't you done yet? Yun Tao, didn't you hear those words? Beast Tamer Hong asked you to scram! Stop disgracing yourself here, you have already tarnished the good reputation of beast tamers!"

Seeing how his opponent has failed the examination, Zhu Jinhuang laughed heartily. He walked forward and stared at Yun Tao in disdain.

"Why don't you give up on beast taming? Without sufficient skills, it is impossible for you to become a beast tamer anyway. If Beast Tamer Hong were to pass you, wouldn't that mean that everyone can become a beast tamer just by buying a bird in the market?"

Zhou Xuan sneered by the side.

In the previous exam, Yun Tao had managed to stand above the rest of them. They thought that he would continue to outshine them for the rest of the exam, but never in their dreams did they expect that fellow to do himself in.

He could have just caught a normal Pixue realm primary stage savage beast, yet he chose to go for a wild bird which god knows popped out from where....

"Beast Tamer Hong...."

Ignoring the insults of the other two, Yun Tao turned to the elder.

"Aren't my words clear? Get out!" Beast Tamer Hong glared at him.

"Give me another chance, you can test it for yourself. This strange bird is really a savage beast, and its cultivation isn't weak...."

Not expecting such a situation, Yun Tao panicked.

He had just promised Elder Zhang Xuan that he would help him choose a good savage beast once he becomes a beast tamer. If he fails the examination now, he would be unable to make good of his words.

And this isn't yet the biggest problem. At least for this problem, he could just apologize, and Zhang Xuan should be magnanimous so as to not pursue this matter.

More importantly, after creating such a huge uproar here, when he returns to the kingdom, his other competitors for the throne would make use of this matter to oppress him. If so, the opportunity for the throne would slip by his hands.

His pursuit for Mo Yu xiaojie would also have to come to an end.

"I don't want to say it for a third time. I'll allow you to walk out by yourself. This way, at least you get to retain a little bit of your pride!"

Beast Tamer Hong refused to listen to his explanation and waved him away.

If he wasn't a prince, he would definitely have slapped him out instead of wasting words with him.

"Scram! Yun Tao, if you still refuse to leave, I will have my men throw you out!" Zhu Jinhuang stared at Yun Tao gleefully.

From today onward, this fellow would be out of the race. Meaning to say, he was one step closer to Mo Yu xiaojie.

"Hurry up and leave. If you continue to cause trouble here, don't blame me for getting nasty."

Zhou Xuan sneered. With his hands behind his back, he glanced at Yun Tao contemptuously.

"I...."

Angered and embarrassed, Yun Tao clenched his fists tightly.

He thought that he could pass the examination easily, yet it ended like this. Gritting his

teeth tightly, he turned around and prepared to leave. But at this moment, a calm voice echoed in the air.

"Yun Tao, since the beast tamers of the Beast Hall are all such useless fools, I don't think you should bother taking the examination!"

From where the voice came from, Zhang Xuan was looking at Yun Tao calmly.

Chapter 243

Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow

The beast tamers of the Beast Hall are useless fools?

Hearing those words, everyone was outraged.

"What did he say?"

"Who's this fellow? Is he courting death?"

"To dare to insult beast tamers, he must be tired of living!"

....

Everyone glared at Zhang Xuan, their eyes filled with killing intent.

The reason why the Beast Hall grew so prosperous was because of the beast tamers. Yet, this fellow had dared to insult all of the beast tamers here. There must be something wrong with his head!

Shen Bi Ru's body trembled and she tugged on the sleeves of the young man before her hurriedly. She nearly fainted from shock.

Where are we?

The Beast Hall!

To be saying that the beast tamers here are all useless fools, aren't you asking for trouble?

This isn't something that can be explained as a rash act, this is clearly a provocation!

From long ago, she knew that Zhang laoshi was bold. But no matter what, she had never imagined that he would be so daring!

"What did you say?"

As everyone expected, Beast Tamer Hong's face turned so red as though he was bleeding. He turned his head to Yun Tao and questioned, "Yun Tao, is this what you think of the Beast Hall as well?"

Zhang Xuan stood together with the crowd from Hanwu Kingdom, so everyone thought that he was Yun Tao's subordinate.

"Elder...." Yun Tao quickly turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

When he heard Zhang Xuan say those words, he nearly went insane as well.

Even though he might fail due to a biased judgement by the examiner, he could still try again next year.

However, now that those words have offended the Beast Hall, it would be impossible for him to take the examination ever again.

Even though he hadn't been with Elder Zhang Xuan for long, he knew that he was a powerful and calm person. He deals with everything rationally and appropriately. So why is he acting so unreliably at such a crucial moment?

He stared at the young man in panic, only to see the other party looking at him calmly, as though he was unconcerned.

Unconcerned?

The edges of Yun Tao's lips twitched.

Is he really bold, or is he truly confident in his strength?

There were several thousands of savage beast in the Beast Hall, and even the weakest one had a Pixue realm cultivation. Even a Zongshi realm expert wouldn't be able to escape after wrecking havoc here!

Flustered, he immediately walked over to persuade Zhang Xuan to apologize. However, the young man simply smiled. With his hands behind his back, he turned to look at Beast Tamer Hong.

"Disregarding the rules, failing to recognize a savage beast before him, acting as he pleases, coming to a conclusion without verifying his facts.... If he isn't a useless fool, what else can he be?"

He spoke slowly and calmly, as though the infuriated Beast Tamer Hong meant nothing to him at all.

"Is he.... lecturing Beast Tamer Hong?"

"Who is this fellow?"

"Even Hall Master Feng wouldn't dare to speak like that!"

....

Hearing that young man's tone that sounded as though he was lecturing a student, everyone felt as though their brain was coming to a halt.

They have seen arrogant people, but they have never seen such an arrogant person.

This fellow must be mad!

Who do you think you are?

Beast Tamer Hong is a famous beast tamer of the Beast Hall. To say that he came to a conclusion without verifying his facts.... This is no longer speaking up for Yun Tao. This is a blunt insult, he doubts the other party's professionalism.

"You said that I disregard the rules and failed to recognize a savage beast?"

Having been criticized in public, Beast Tamer Hong felt the blood within his body go on a rampage.

"I, Hong Feng, have been a beast tamer for thirty-seven years. I have tamed twenty-four savage beasts and taught a hundred and eighteen students. Three of them even became beast tamers. Even though I don't claim to be learned in the profound art of beast taming, I am not someone who would speak nonsense! Yet, you said that I disregard the rules and failed to recognize a savage beast? Fine! If you don't explain yourself today, regardless of who you are, don't blame me for not going easy on you!"

Infuriated, Beast Tamer Hong's revealed his cultivation. He was a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert, and was not too far away from reaching Half-Zongshi.

Roar!

At the same time, a massive savage beast appeared and stood beside him.

It was a giant red-eyed ape. Around three-meter tall, every single movement it made caused the ground to tremor.

A beast tamer usually fought along with its tamed beast.

This giant red-eyed ape had also reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle. A savage aura emanated as though a tide over the crowd, and the pressure it exerted on the others was several times stronger than that of Beast Tamer Hong.

Upon witnessing this, everyone's face went pale. Subconsciously, they retreated a few steps backward.

If the two of them were to fight alongside one another, they would be able to match up against even a Half-Zongshi!

"Why? You refuse to admit your mistakes and want to make a move on me?"

Even amidst the immense pressure, Zhang Xuan simply flung his sleeves and replied calmly.

The other party may be strong, but he has also reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle. Furthermore, given the numerous tactics he possessed, even if ten of them came at him, it would be impossible for them to hurt him at all.

"What is going on?"

The atmosphere in the room was completely still and it seemed that Beast Tamer Hong was about to make a move when a bellow sounded in the room. Then, three figures walked in.

"It's Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, and Beast Tamer Wang. They are all 2-star beast tamers!"

"Didn't Beast Tamer Hong say that they are busy?"

"This fellow challenged the prestige of the Beast Hall. Even if they are busy, they would definitely rush over upon knowing of the matter!"

"This fellow is done for. Yun Tao as well!"

"That's right. Hanwu Kingdom is just a Tier 2 Kingdom, how can it withstand the anger of the Beast Hall?"

....

Upon seeing the trio, everyone immediately burst into discussion.

All three 2-star beast tamers of the Beast Hall have arrived at the scene.

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan glanced at Yun Tao gleefully, as though heartened by the tragic plight that was about to befall him.

When Yun Tao and Zhang Xuan insulted Beast Tamer Hong, it could only be considered as a personal grudge. However, from the moment that the Hall Master appeared, it become an issue between the Beast Hall and Hanwu Kingdom. This matter could no longer be settled easily.

Even Mo Yu xiaojie couldn't help but shake her head.

She thought that Yun Tao was a fool for bringing a bird for the beast tamer examination, but to think that his subordinate would be even dumber!

He insulted Beast Tamer Hong so thoroughly, how could the other party simply let this matter go?

If this matter blows up, the one who would be at a loss is Hanwu Kingdom.

Even so, there wasn't the slightest bit of emotion on her face. As though an emotionless fairy, she watched the spectacle impassively.

Yun Tao's fate has nothing to do with her, and she couldn't be bothered with it either.

"Hall Master, Beast Tamer Lu, Beast Tamer Wang!"

Upon seeing the trio, Beast Tamer Hong immediately stepped forward and greeted the three. Even though he was raging within, he took the time to explain the situation to them.

"You said that Hong Feng disregarded the rules and failed to recognize a savage beast before him?"

Hearing those words, the Hall Master Feng turned to look at Zhang Xuan with a sharp glance.

Hall Master Feng is an elder in his sixties. With a towering stature, his movements are dignified.

He is a Zongshi realm expert!

Beast Tamer Lu and Beast Tamer Wang merely stood quietly beside him, but somehow, they felt like mountains, impossible to budge.

The three 2-star beast tamers were all Zongshi-realm experts!

It was precisely because of them that no one dared to act out of line in the Beast Hall.

"Indeed!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Do you know that your words are questioning his professionalism? To a beast tamer, those words are equivalent to sullying his reputation." Hall Master Feng's eyes narrowed.

The reason why Beast Tamer Hong was so infuriated was because the young man questioned his abilities as a beast tamer. For a beast tamer to be unable recognize a savage beast, he would become a laughingstock.

Zhang Xuan didn't explain the matter. Instead, he walked to the center of the room and snapped his fingers.

Wuuuu!

The strange bird on Yun Tao's shoulder flew over.

Compared to Yun Tao, the strange bird was much more receptive to Zhang Xuan's

commands. Even though the latter had beaten him up, he had also helped to raise its cultivation.

After the strange bird sat on Zhang Xuan's hands, Zhang Xuan lifted his gaze and smiled.

"I would like to ask the four beast tamers what the name of this bird is."

"The name?"

Seeing Zhang Xuan ask about the name of the bird instead of answering Hall Master Feng's question, everyone gaze swiftly fell on the bird.

Beast Tamer Hong's complexion darkened, and he harrumphed, "Even though it is rare, I have once read a description of this bird on a book. The name of the bird is [Bone Bird]. It's said that this bird has an additional bone on its back to support its entire body. This bird is usually used for appreciation purposes and doesn't possess any combat abilities. Naturally, it isn't considered as a savage beast. Why? Are you going to say that I'm wrong?"

"Now that you speak of it, the bird does match the description of the Bone Bird!"

Beast Tamer Lu stroked his beard as he said, "The Bone Bird lives in the depths of the forest, and it is known for its moving song at daybreak. Just like Beast Tamer Hong has said, this bird is only for appreciation purpose. Even though it is a rare and valuable bird, as it cannot be considered as a savage beast, it isn't eligible for use in the beast tamer examination!"

Hearing the words of the duo, Zhang Xuan simply chuckled and turned to Hall Master Feng.

"What does Hall Master Feng think of this?"

"I think that it is the Bone Bird as well. There is a bone protruding out from its back clearly!" Hall Master Feng nodded in approval of the other two's words.

Upon hearing the three beast tamer coming to the same conclusion, Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed. "Since you have all determined it to be the Bone Bird, who can tell me the specific traits of a Bone Bird?"

"The Bone Bird has a black back, red beak, and golden claws. On its back, there are three feathers which creates a clear melody when it's flying. Thus, its melodious birdsong actually doesn't come from its throat, but from the feathers behind...."

Before the three beast tamer could answer, a quiet voice sounded.

It was Mo Yu xiaojie.

She stated the unique characteristics of the Bone Bird recorded on the books.

But before she could finish stating the full description, she paused abruptly. Her beautiful complexion turned dark, and confusion reflected in her eyes.

"You're right. The clear birdsong of the Bone Bird doesn't come from its throat, but from the feathers at its back. That is to say, as long as it flies, there should be a melody.... But when it flew over just now, did any one of you hear it?"

Zhang Xuan smiled.

"This...." Everyone was taken aback.

The strange bird has flown about several times, but not even once did they hear any sound. If they didn't see the bird for themselves, they wouldn't have known that it was in here.

If what Mo Yu xiaojie mentioned was correct, does it mean that.... the strange bird isn't the Bone Bird?

"The claw of this strange bird is gold, but there is a red dot at the center of its claw. Furthermore, there is a crown at the top of its head. Also, instead of one, it has three bones protruding from its back, and there isn't any sound-making feathers behind either. More importantly.... It is light and flies swiftly!"

Zhang Xuan raised the strange bird up and explained its characteristics one after another.

With every aspect he explained, Beast Tamer Hong's face would darken.

Because at this moment, he could also tell that the strange bird was slightly different from the Bone Bird he spoke of.

"But if it isn't a Bone Bird, what is it?"

He asked.

Putting his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan smiled.

"It is an Ancient Beast——Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow!"

Chapter 244

Punishment

"Ancient beast?"

Everyone's expression changed immediately.

There are many different kinds of savage beasts, and ancient beasts possess the strongest bloodline of them all.

Along with their maturing, the blood within their body awakens and their strength grows.

There is no beast tamer in the world who doesn't take pride in taming an ancient beast. That is because along with the rise in the tamed beast's strength, the owner, through the connection created via the contract, would find his cultivation raised as well.

However, such savage beasts are extremely rare, to the point that they are almost extinct. Countless beast tamers have traveled through the mountains, scaled various mountains, and investigated the innumerable legends and folklores of the world, but even so, they had been unable to find any trace of ancient beasts.

Yet, one had appeared right here, and it had been tamed by.... Yun Tao?

"That's impossible! Even if this fellow isn't a Bone Bird, it is impossible for it to be an ancient beast. They are already extinct...."

Beast Tamer Hong was the first one to question Zhang Xuan's words.

Even though the others didn't say anything, they shared his thoughts. They couldn't believe that the strange bird is an ancient beast.

"The ancient bloodline has ceased to exist. Even if there are still ancient beasts out there, they must have attained the level of spirit beasts. How can it be an ordinary savage beast?"

Zhu Jinhuang couldn't help but harrumph, "Even if you wish to escape from punishment, you shouldn't spout lies."

"You say that this strange bird is an ancient beast? What a joke! My Tiger Head Beast must be a primordial beast then!" Zhou Xuan sneered.

Primordial beasts are even more incredible than ancient beasts, and were naturally much rarer as well.

They weren't the only ones acting like that. Even Yun Tao's lips twitched upon hearing those words and he nearly fainted.

It is just a gluttonous and vindictive bird, how can it be related to the ancient beasts in any way?

One must know that this is the Beast Hall. If Zhang Xuan's words were to be proven false, he would be in deep trouble.

"Hehe!" Zhang Xuan chuckled. "If I'm not wrong, the Beast Hall should have a way to ascertain bloodline, right? It doesn't matter if you don't believe my words. We'll know the answer once we give it a quick check."

Since it is an ancient beast, its bloodline comes from the ancient times and possesses unique powers. Thus, it isn't difficult to conduct a test.

"This...."

Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Hong, and the others glanced at each other and nodded their heads simultaneously.

If this strange bird is truly an ancient beast, then this would be a groundbreaking affair for the Beast Hall.

It has been more than a thousand years since the establishment of this branch, but there hasn't been a single beast tamer who had tamed an ancient beast.

"Legend has it that during ancient times, the spiritual energy in the air was violent and harsh. It is far from the gentle spiritual energy in the air now. Even though it was easier to cultivate then, it caused the blood of the savage beasts to contain destructive powers, and the blood would billow as though boiling water. If the strange bird is truly

an ancient beast, other savage beasts would surely be unable to withstand the might of a single drop of its blood...."

After a momentary pause, Hall Master Feng said.

The bloodline of ancient beasts is pure and searing. It is completely different from that of the savage beasts existing now. Mostly, just a drop of the blood of an ancient beast can cause the entire bloodstream of a savage beast to boil and burn it to death.

Thus, it isn't too difficult to check verify an ancient bloodline.

After passing down some instructions to an apprentice, the apprentice walked out and he came back in with a savage beast not before long.

It was around the size of a hare, and its entire body was white. It was somewhat similar to the Pill Sample Beast of the Apothecary Guild, just that it was slightly larger.

That is the savage beast used by the Beast Hall to experiment all kinds of medicine and food.

"Here!"

Zhang Xuan tapped softly and a droplet of blood emerged from the body of the strange bird. With a light flick, it flew toward Hall Master Feng.

Grabbing it with his hands, Hall Master Feng swiftly enveloped it with his zhenqi before placing it into the mouth of the savage beast.

Sssssss!

It was as though water was thrown into a pot of burning oil, a sizzling sound echoed in the room. Soon, the savage beast turned completely red and it squirmed about the floor in agony. Then, it ceased to move. It was dead.

Clearly, it was burned to death by the overwhelmingly powerful bloodline.

"This...."

Upon witnessing this, Hall Master Feng and the others narrowed their eyes.

Only the ancient bloodline possesses such might.

Silence!

The entire room turned deathly silent.

Even the most foolish of those here could tell that the young man was right. The unimpressive strange bird before them was indeed an ancient beast.

It might be small, but it was dozens of times more valuable than the savage beasts Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang had tamed just because of its ancient bloodline.

The two shouldn't even be compared to it, it was just like comparing diamond and dirt.

"Did I just mock an ancient beast?"

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan's mouth twitched. They felt as though their faces had been slapped, and they were on the verge of tears.

That was a savage beast, an existence that would cause an uproar in the Beast Hall! Yet, they insulted it as though it was worth nothing....

To be unable to recognize an ancient beast, how shameless was it for them to have called themselves beast tamers?

If word were to spread out, they would become laughingstocks. Even if they do become official beast tamers, this piece of history would follow them no matter where they go.

While the others were focused on the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, Mo Yu xiaojie's eyes were fixated on the young man. Her expression was grim.

Even Hall Master Feng and the others failed to recognize the true identity of the bird, yet this fellow was able identify it. Furthermore, before three great Zongshis, he was able to speak calmly without fear.... Where in the world did he come from?

Is it possible for such an incredible figure to hail from a small and remote kingdom like Tianxuan Kingdom?

"Did I.... actually judge Yun Tao, who tamed an ancient beast, with a fail?"

Beast Tamer Hong's face paled. In an instant, he seemed to have aged a decade.

This is an ancient beast! Something which countless beast tamers dream of, but are unable to tame!

Not only are they rare, they possess great intelligence as well. As such, they don't submit to anyone easily.... Given his own taming skills, it would be hard for him to successfully tame an ancient beast even if he met one. On the other hand, Yun Tao had managed to tame one, but he failed him and even demanded him to get out....

Ignoring everyone's shock, Zhang Xuan stepped forward and said.

"Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow possesses the ability to absorb lightning to awaken its bloodline. While this ancient sparrow is similar to the Bone Bird in many ways, there are also many differences. Due to the omnivorous nature of the Bone Bird, its eyes are cloudy. On the other hand, the ancient sparrow's eyes pierces straight into one's soul. Even though it isn't obvious, if one pays careful attention, the difference can be seen."

"Next, the claws. Putting aside the red dot at the center, the claws of the ancient sparrow are hard and sharp, allowing it to tear through the average weapons easily, needless to say, human flesh. Beast Tamer Hong said that it doesn't possess high combative abilities, but that is because it is still young and doesn't know how to use them. The moment it learns to utilize these, it would be able to tear even Tongxuan realm experts into two easily.

"Of course, these two characteristics aren't too obvious. It is difficult for the average beast tamer to spot them."

At this point, Zhang Xuan paused for a moment and calmly pointed to the head of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, "The greatest distinguishing trait is its red crown. Even though it isn't large, it is clearly a symbolism of 'sovereignty'. With this crown, even those who don't know anything about beast taming will know that this bird is anything but simple, and that it isn't something that an ordinary wild animal like the Bone Bird can compare up to! To fail to spot such an obvious distinguishing characteristic, and claim that Yun Tao is wrong and fail him...."

At this point, Zhang Xuan gazed coldly at him, "Beast Tamer Hong, is this how you assess savage beasts?"

"I...."

Beast Tamer Hong's face paled. Under Zhang Xuan's gaze, he couldn't help but step back.

"What gave you the confidence to immediately deem Yun Tao to have failed, and ask him to scram?"

Zhang Xuan continued to utter harshly.

Deng deng deng!

Under the sharp words of the other party, Beast Tamer Hong seemed to have lost all of his courage and retreated once more.

A book on the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow was compiled after Zhang Xuan knocked it out. As there was a detailed introduction on the ancient beast within the book, Zhang Xuan knew about these facts long ago.

If the examiner were to assess Yun Tao's tamed beast seriously, Zhang Xuan wouldn't have hidden the matter.

However.... After Zhang Xuan pointed out his mistake, he went so far as to emanate his zhenqi and summon his tamed beast, wanting to get rough with Zhang Xuan!

As Zhang Xuan was a Tongxuan realm pinnacle cultivator, he didn't need to fear the other party's intimidation. However, if his cultivation was any lower, he would have suffered a severe injury from the other party's actions.

Since the other party was treating him in such a manner, there was no reason for Zhang Xuan to treat him kindly either.

"It's my negligence...."

Beast Tamer Hong's complexion was awful.

The other party's words were completely true. Even if he wanted to refute his words, there was nothing he could say.

"As an examiner, you judged Yun Tao by your emotions, failing to maintain impartiality.

Your actions nearly caused a talented beast tamer who tamed an ancient beast to be buried in dirt!"

Zhang Xuan flung his sleeves, "Is this how the Beast Hall operate? If so, am I mistaken in saying that the beast tamers are useless fools?"

"I...."

Facing the other party's questions, Beast Tamer Hong trembled in agitation, but he wasn't able to say anything at all.

When he first heard the other party's words, he was so furious that he felt he could explode. However, after knowing that he nearly sent away a talented beast tamer who tamed an ancient beast, he could only silently accept the other party's criticisms.

The main point of the beast tamer examination was to recruit new talents for the Beast Hall. To send away a genius like that is a violation of the rules of the Beast Hall.

"Please calm down. There are innumerable species of ancient beasts, and the information on eighty to ninety percent of them had disappeared along with time. Even the Beast Hall can't possibly have a comprehensive list on all of them. It is natural for such mistakes to occur!"

Hall Master Feng walked up with a smile, "How about this, since it's our Beast Hall's fault, we won't shirk responsibility. We'll give Yun Tao another shot at the assessment! As for Beast Tamer Hong, due to his negligence, he will be sent to the Beast Forest to raise savage beasts, and for three years, he's not to step out from the place!"

After saying those words, he turned to look at Beast Tamer Hong and asked, "Beast Tamer Hong, do you accept your punishment?"

"I am willing to accept my punishment!" Beast Tamer Hong bowed, disconsolate.

"To send Beast Tamer Hong to the Beast Forest for three years just because of that? Furthermore, not to step out from that place?"

"Isn't that.... too harsh?"

"The Beast Forest is a place where savage beasts are raised, and it is similar to a pig sty. Normally, only apprentices would visit there. For the 1-star pinnacle Beast Tamer

Hong to stay there for three years, that's truly a harsh punishment!"

....

Upon hearing those words, everyone was stunned. Then, they turned to look at Zhang Xuan in fear.

That was Beast Tamer Hong! Other than the three 2-star beast tamers, he was the most prestigious beast tamer in the Beast Hall. Yet, with just words, that lad managed to get him exiled to the lowly Beast Forest to do menial labor, not to leave the place for three years. His abilities and means are truly fearsome!

While everyone was staring at Zhang Xuan fearfully, Zhang Xuan secretly sent a telepathic message to Shen Bi Ru.

"That.... What kind of place is the Beast Forest? Is that fellow's punishment harsh?"

"...." Shen Bi Ru widened her eyes, and her face was distorted in her frenzy.

Chapter 245

Mo Yu's Challenge

Shen Bi Ru got increasingly confused about the young man before her.

The Beast Forest is where the savage beasts reside, and it is an untidy and dirty location. It is one thing to feed the savage beasts, but for one to have to clean their feces, bathe them and comb their fur.... For an official beast tamer to be grounded to such a location, it could be considered as a severe punishment.

All beast tamers, even if it were a mere apprentice, who have been to the Beast Hall would know what this represents....

Yet, he asked what kind of place it was and whether the punishment was considered harsh....

Are you joking with me?

It is one thing if you don't know the first thing about taming. However, you easily tamed the Gold Alloyed Panther and the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, as well as raised their cultivation. Furthermore.... You were able to identify an ancient beast when Hall Master Feng and the others were unable to....

You recognized an ancient beast so unknown that even Hall Master Feng knew nothing about, yet you don't know about such fundamental knowledge....

If it were anyone else, she would have thought that he was intentionally looking for reasons to strike up a conversation with her so as to win her favor. However, Shen Bi Ru knew that this young man truly knew nothing at all!

Because.... Even if he didn't say anything, Shen Bi Ru was more than willing to strike up a conversation with him!

"The Beast Forest is...."

Suppressing the stifled sensation she was experiencing in her chest, she explained the

matter regarding the Beast Forest. At the very end, she couldn't help but ask, "Do you really not know anything about beast taming?"

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Even though there were records on beast tamers in Tianxuan Kingdom's Book Collection Vault, information was in random bits and pieces; there wasn't any reliable content on the occupation. The reasons why Zhang Xuan was able to help the Gold Alloyed Panther and Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow achieve a breakthrough was because of the Library of Heaven's Path and his pure zhenqi....

Truthfully speaking, Zhang Xuan knew nothing about beast taming.

"Alright!"

Hearing the other party's confirmation, Shen Bi Ru became speechless.

Despite knowing nothing at all, you managed to tame a savage beast. Furthermore, you were able to make the Hall Master punish an official beast tamer, and not to forget, leave four beast tamers speechless....

At this rate If you were to know beast taming, won't you overthrow the entire Beast Hall?

You said that you don't know anything about formations, yet you were able to see through the flaws in the Green Wood Confinement Formation. You said you don't know anything about beast taming, but you were able to tame a savage beast so easily.... Brother, can you teach me how I can be as ignorant as you?

Honestly speaking, I finally understand why 'ignorance' is bliss....

Shen Bi Ru felt so stifled that she wanted to vomit blood. On the other hand, Yun Tao was about to go mad with excitement.

After being criticized by Beast Tamer Hong, he thought that he would have to leave the Beast Hall in disappointment today. Yet, Elder Zhang Xuan managed to solve his problem with just a few words.

More importantly.... That strange bird is actually an ancient beast, the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow!

As an apprentice beast tamer, he knew how valuable the bloodline of an ancient beast was. While it couldn't be said to be worth a city, it didn't pale much in comparison.

Elder Zhang Xuan recognized the true identity of the strange bird, but he still gave the opportunity to him, allowing him to tame it....

"After this beast tamer examination is over, I should find a way to dispel the contract...."

Yun Tao made up his mind.

While having an ancient beast was great, it was impossible for him to control or protect it with his current strength.

On top of that, the ancient sparrow was obviously much closer to Elder Zhang Xuan. After the examination was over, he would dispel the contract and allow the ancient beast to accompany its true owner.

If Zhang Xuan were to know of his thoughts, he would definitely shake his head with a smile.

Honestly speaking, Zhang Xuan had no interest in a mere ancient beast.

Possessing the Heaven's Path Divine Art and Heaven's Path zhenqi, along with the rise in his cultivation, he would be able to cleanse the bloodline of any savage beast as he pleases. As long as he has sufficient time, he would be able to transform any ordinary savage beast into an ancient beast!

More importantly, even though the bloodline of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow was impressive, it was small. Not only could Zhang Xuan not ride on it, it would be riding on his shoulder all day long. Thus, to Zhang Xuan, it was of no value to him.

If it were an aerial primordial beast, Zhang Xuan would have given it some thought. While Zhang Xuan didn't mind taming ancient beasts, bringing it around everywhere, cultivating together, the contract, and all kind of other miscellaneous matters, just thinking about them was a huge hassle in itself.... Better not.

....

Hall Master Feng personally conducted the examination for Yun Tao. Knowing that the

ancient beast had submitted completely, there was no doubt about its loyalty. Thus, Zhang Xuan couldn't be bothered to continue watching.

Stretching his back and pondering about how he should go to Tianwu Kingdom to look for the Poison Hall, he suddenly caught a whiff of fragrance. A beautiful figure appeared before him. In her eyes, one could see pride and a refusal to concede.

"To be able to recognize the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, you are knowledgeable. You must be a beast tamer!"

The genius, Mo Yu.

When she was evaluated as a grade-1, she should have been the one to enjoy the looks of admiration from the others. Yet, this fellow stole her limelight, and thus, she couldn't help but be interested in the affairs of this young man.

Ever since her birth, except for that one person, regardless of whether it was her occupation or her cultivation, as long as she set her mind to it, she would always stand out from the others. She thought that, just like the many times before, she would definitely be in the first place for this beast tamer examination, but from the looks of it now, it is likely to be impossible.

While the Tongxuan realm Viridescent Eagle isn't weak, it pales too far in comparison to an ancient beast.

After several days of being with Yun Tao, she knew that it was impossible for that fellow to possess the capability to tame an ancient beast. Thus, it was likely that he had a helper with him, and that helper was this unimpressive-looking fellow before her.

"I'm not a beast tamer!" Glancing at the other party, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

"You're not? Then how do you know of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow? Also, how did you tame this Gold Alloyed Panther then? Not to mention, gain intimacy with that ancient sparrow?"

A gleam flashed across Mo Yu's eyes.

As a master teacher apprentice, it was natural that she had a sharp eye for things. It was clear that he possessed great intimacy with his Gold Alloyed Panther, and the

ancient sparrow seemed to be attached to him as well. She found it hard to believe that he wasn't a beast tamer.

"Oh, it might just be my good luck!" Zhang Xuan casually replied.

Other people would be trying their best to fawn on her given her noble identity as the third princess of Tianwu Kingdom and her great talents. However, Zhang Xuan didn't think much of her identity.

"Luck?"

Mo Yu staggered.

Taming beasts is about sparing no means and schemes to build a relationship with savage beasts. Luck.... What the heck is that?

Whenever others speak with her, they would be trying their best to act knowledgeable, using all sort of exaggerated and bombastic phrases to impress her. However, not only did this fellow refuse to tell her anything, he was even unwilling to put in the effort to make up an excuse....

Luck.... If such a thing could tame savage beasts, who would be willing to spend so much effort to become a beast tamer?

Born with a silver spoon in her mouth, everyone has always talked to her respectfully. No one has ever dared to treat her in such a way.

She couldn't help but feel dismal.

Seeing how even the esteemed third princess of Tianwu Kingdom suffered a blow from Zhang Xuan, Shen Bi Ru shook her head.

When she first spoke to this fellow, she also nearly died from anger.

Now that she has gotten used to it, it felt much better. Other than suffering a few shocks and the face-slapping on a daily basis, at the very least, she is able to handle his speech now.

Talking to Zhang Xuan when one doesn't know his temper and character is definitely suicidal.

Unaware of Zhang Xuan 'glorious past', Mo Yu xiaojie took in a few deep breaths before managing to calm her breathing. Then, she raised her head as though a proud crane.

"If you're unwilling to speak of it, I shall not force you. But to be able to make a savage beast submit so willingly, you do possess some capability! How about this, why don't we have a competition? If I win, you will tell me how you caught the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow and how you won its favor! On the other hand, if you win, I will you give a 2-star Master Teacher Jiang Shu's Tutelage Jade Token!"

"2-star Master Teacher Jiang Shu?"

"I heard that he is the most incredible master teacher in Tianwu Kingdom, reaching 2-star pinnacle. Furthermore, he is the person in charge of Tianwu Master Teacher Pavilion. His Tutelage Jade Token is invaluable, even if it's just for two hours!"

"This object is something one can't buy with just money.... If I were to obtain it, I will surely be able to reach Tongxuan realm or even higher!"

"It is a waste to use this token when trying to reach Tongxuan realm. At the very least, one should only use it when trying for Half-Zongshi. Only then will it be worth its value!"

....

Several people in the surrounding had been paying attention to Mo Yu xiaojie's actions. Seeing her strike up a conversation with this fellow, they immediately focused the hearing. Upon hearing the stakes, they were so excited that their eyes shone and their breathing hastened.

Even if it were just for two hours, a 2-star master teacher's Tutelage Jade Token was something countless people dream of.

It might very well be the impetus for one to surpass their current limits to reach higher realms.

No one would be able to turn down such an enticing offer.

Everyone thought that the lad would agree immediately when Zhang Xuan shook his head and replied, "I'm not interested!"

After impersonating a master teacher for a period of time and interacting with Liu Shi and the others, Zhang Xuan knew what a Tutelage Jade Token was and what it was used for.

However, his method of cultivation is only limited by the number of books in his possession. He doesn't require guidance from anyone.

Even the Tutelage Jade Token of a 3-star or a 4-star master teacher wouldn't entice him.

No matter how knowledgeable they are, can they be even more knowledgeable than the Library of Heaven's Path?

Nothing could be hidden from the heavens. Even 7-star or 8-star master teachers wouldn't match up to the value of the Library of Heaven's Path.

"Not interested? Have you thought the matter through...."

With such a huge bait, Mo Yu originally thought that Zhang Xuan would accept it immediately. However, after hearing his answer, she was taken aback. She was about to say something when the Heart Inquisition Crystal lit up. Yun Tao was done with his examination, and slowly, numbers floated into appearance on the surface of the crystal....

40!

"What? A Loyalty Level of 40? Is this.... Advanced Taming?"

Hall Master Feng was taken aback. He stood up abruptly, and his eyes reflected his disbelief.

He wasn't the only one. The entire room immediately burst into commotion. Even Mo Yu was dumbfounded by the sight.

The various phases to the taming of a beast could be divided into Inceptive Taming, Advanced Taming, and Complete Submission.

For Inceptive Taming, the loyalty of the tamed beast would be around 15 to 30. At this level, the Beast Tamer is able to easily summon their savage beast, and it will follow him. In a way, it is similar to a domesticated animal.

For Advanced Taming, the loyalty of the tamed beast would be around 31 to 45. At this point, the beast tamer and savage beast would establish a contract and they would be capable of communicating with one another telepathically.

As for the even more advanced Complete Submission, the Loyalty Level would exceed 45. Usually, it would require many years of friendship between the tamed beast and the beast tamer. At this level, they would be able to practice the same cultivation technique and improve together.

It was already incredible to achieve Inceptive Taming with an ancient beast. Yet, the Loyalty Level of the strange bird has already reached 40.... This means that it was already beyond the level of just following Yun Tao. A contract has already been established between the two!

But.... how is this possible?

"How.... did you do it?"

Hall Master Feng couldn't help but ask.

"This...." Yun Tao hesitated.

"I understand that it might be inconvenient for you to speak, but don't worry too much about it!" Upon seeing his attitude, Hall Master Feng thought that it was secret, so he hurriedly added in.

"That's not it. Actually...." Yun Tao scratched his head. "It's Elder Zhang Xuan's efforts. He beat up this ancient sparrow, and this fellow submitted immediately...."

Chapter 246

246.Are You Taking the Beast Tamer Examination?

"Gave it.... a good beating?"

Everyone present was stunned.

Hall Master Feng's lips twitched and he nearly fainted.

This is an ancient beast, and there might not a second one in the entire Xuanluo Mountain Range. Given its value, everyone would be vying to dote on it, yet.... beating it up?

Furthermore, to tame a beast, a beast tamer has to cultivate feelings with it. Beating it up may encourage it to submit grudgingly, but as time goes by, all kinds of problems would surface.

But.... if Zhang Xuan really used such rough methods to force the Ancient Lightning Cloud Beast to submit to Yun Tao, then why would it have a Loyalty Level of 40 toward Yun Tao?

There were those who forced savage beasts to submit to them, but even those who managed to establish a contract with their tamed beast could only attain a Loyalty Level of 31 or so at maximum.

A Loyalty Level of over 40 means that a tamed beast is truly willing to follow its master, without the slightest bit of doubt!

"Can it be that.... ancient beasts have to be tamed in such a way?"

Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, and Beast Tamer Wang stared at one another in deep contemplation.

There wasn't a precedent in which an ancient beast was tamed in this Beast Hall, and as such, no one knew how an ancient beast was supposed to be tamed. As such, everyone thought that to tame an ancient beast, one had to employ the same method

as with other savage beasts; treat it with care and concern to befriend it before trying to tame it.... Can the key to taming them truly be simple violence?

"This.... Where is the Elder Zhang Xuan you speak of? Can we pay him a visit?"

Even after pondering, Hall Master Feng was unable to reach a comprehension. As such, he asked Yun Tao for Zhang Xuan's whereabouts.

From what he visualized, this elder Yun Tao spoke of was likely to be an esteemed beast tamer who has an in-depth knowledge about ancient beasts

"Pay him a visit? There's no need for it, Elder Zhang Xuan is here...."

Hearing Hall Master Feng's words, Yun Tao was stunned. Then, recovering from his daze, he pointed to Zhang Xuan as he spoke.

"He is.... Elder Zhang Xuan?"

Hall Master Feng was astounded. He felt his vision turning gray.

No matter what, Yun Tao was twenty-seven years old and, not to mention, a prince of Hanwu Kingdom. Since he addressed the other party as an elder, the other party should at least be someone in his fifties and sixties. Yet.... it was the fellow who just recognized the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, a youngster who hadn't even reached his twenties....

"That's right. Elder may be young, but his ability in beast taming is incredible. Do you see that Gold Alloyed Panther beside him? It is savage beast that he just tamed, and it was less than ten minutes from the point he saw it before it was tamed."

Afraid that Hall Master Feng would disregard Zhang Xuan, Yun Tao hurriedly added in a praise for Zhang Xuan.

"Taming a Gold Alloyed Panther.... in less than ten minutes?"

"Am I dreaming?"

"Even if you're spouting nonsense, you should have a limit. Even the most basic Inceptive Taming takes a minimum of three to five days. Yet, you said that he tamed it within ten minutes?"

"Why does it sound like a huge joke to me?"

....

Yun Tao didn't try to lower his voice at all. As such, everyone in the room heard his voice clearly. They stared at one another blankly.

Putting aside Mo Yu, Zhou Xuan, and the others, even their guards who had experience in beast taming knew how difficult it was to tame a savage beast.

One had to understand the other party's condition, habits, companion, likes and dislikes....

Only after getting familiar with all of these information can one formulate a plan to tame the savage beast. Furthermore, they have to do subtly so as to not incur the savage beast's displeasure.... In all, if one includes the preparatory work one has to do beforehand, taming a savage beast should take a minimum of several months. Ten minutes.... Who are you trying to deceive?

Not mentioning a Pixue realm savage beast, would a young puppy follow you home just after ten minutes?

Mo Yu xiaojie stared at the young man who has just rejected her in disbelief.

Taming a savage beast in ten minutes?

If it was true, then it was suicidal for her to challenge him to a beast taming competition!

To tame this Viridescent Eagle, she had spent a huge amount of time and prepared two months in advance....

"How did he manage to tame a Gold Alloyed Panther in such a short time? What kind of method did he use? Did he use a female companion to attract it? Or maybe he tackled its gluttony? The allure of power.... Or did he resort to some other unique means?"

Beast Tamer Lu couldn't help but ask. He immediately pointed out over ten different ways of common beast taming methods

"That's not it. Those are the fundamental methods, and those methods are slow. I think he probably used multiple methods simultaneously. He first captured the attention of the other party in the shortest time possible before removing the guard of the savage beast bit by bit, increasing the intimacy between the duo swiftly....

Hall Master Feng said.

"However, it is impossible for him to employ so many different methods within just ten minutes. My conjecture is that it should be a single powerful method...." Beast Tamer Lu shook his head.

The two of them had dedicated their entire lives to the art of beast taming, and knowledge of beast taming had been ingrained directly into their soul. Upon hearing that someone had managed to successfully tame a savage beast within an extremely short period of time, their first question was the method the other party used to achieve the feat.

"Cough cough, Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, Elder Zhang Xuan.... didn't use any of those methods!"

Hearing their discussion slowly becoming more and more complex as various theories were dumped in to support their claims, Yun Tao couldn't help but stop them.

"He didn't use any of those methods? Could it be that.... he used some new beast taming method?"

The duo's eyes lit up.

A new beast taming method was similar to the emergence of a new apothecary forging technique. It would create a huge uproar, and the creator would leave his name in history.

If there was truly a method to tame a Pixue realm savage beast in less than ten minutes, the art of beast taming would be revolutionized.

"It's not a new beast taming method, but...." Yun Tao scratched his head, as though he still found the fight he saw previously incredulous. "Elder Zhang Xuan pummeled this Gold Alloyed Panther, then.... it submitted to him!"

"What?"

"Pummeled it?"

Hall Master Feng and the others were flabbergasted.

Zhang Xuan's actions of taming the ancient beast by beating it up could have been attributed to the difference in species, so his violent method might have worked. However.... there were others had tamed Gold Alloyed Panthers before him, and it was a known fact that these panthers possess an arrogant personality. They rarely interact with others, and the best way to tame it was to attract it using a female companion....

Yet, it submitted right after receiving a beating?

"That's right. Actually, I intended to tame this Gold Alloyed Panther for the examination, but I underestimated its strength and nearly got killed. It was Elder Zhang Xuan who appeared and saved us. After elder pummeled that fellow, it submitted completely to him, initiating a contract on its own volition. In truth, elder had been unwilling to accept it. If not for my persuasion, he might have turned it down."

Yun Tao recounted.

"Submitting right after a pummeling? Furthermore, it's a Complete Submission, and it initiated a contract on its own volition?"

"The Gold Alloyed Panther offered to become his tamed beast, but he was unwilling to accept it...."

"Other people had to squander their fortune and serve a savage beast as though it was a king in order to tame it, but he only has to beat it up...."

....

Hearing those words, everyone staggered and nearly spurted a mouthful of blood.

Especially for Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang. Their body trembled and they nearly passed out from astonishment.

In order to tame the savage beasts beside them, the kingdoms behind them had devoted great manpower and a massive fortune. Even so, they had only managed to achieve an Inceptive Taming, and the savage beast could possibly leave them at any

moment. On the other hand, this fellow simply beat up the savage beast, and it immediately submitted to him....

When did beast taming become so simple?

"To be able to tame a savage beast just by beating up, as well as to recognize an ancient beast.... Without a doubt, he's a genius beast tamer!"

Recovering from the shock, Beast Tamer Lu's eyes glowed in excitement.

"Right, is he.... a beast tamer?"

Suddenly recalling something, Beast Tamer Wang asked.

Since the other party was able to tame savage beasts so easily, he should be a beast tamer. But if so, why wasn't there any records on him in the Beast Hall?

"He isn't one, he hasn't taken the examination yet! He is just an amateur who learned a little beast taming during his free time!" Yun Tao said.

Along their journey here, Yun Tao had already inquired if Elder Zhang Xuan had attempted any beast tamer examination.

There was a large group of talented personnel in the world who didn't take the examinations, but possessed exceptional talents.

"He hasn't taken the examination? Great, can you help me ask him if he's willing to become a beast tamer? As long as he's willing to, I will conduct an individual examination for him!"

Beast Tamer Feng hurriedly said.

With his incredible aptitude and means in beast taming, he would surely shine brightly when he becomes an official beast tamer. Perhaps, this Beast Hall branch might.... become well-known because of his influence. More importantly, if he truly possesses the ability to tame a savage beast just by beating it up, then if he were to join that competition.... he would surely be able to win first place!

Of course, in order to make sure of that, Hall Master Feng would conduct the examination personally.

"Take the beast tamer examination? I'll help you ask him...."

Yun Tao nodded his head. He walked over to Zhang Xuan and asked, "Elder, Hall Master Feng said that if you are willing to take the beast tamer examination, he will conduct an individual examination for you...."

"Forget it...."

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan rejected the offer.

The reason why Zhang Xuan was able to tame beasts was because of the Library of Heaven's Path. If he were to take the examination, his lack of knowledge would immediately be revealed.

However, that wasn't the aspect Zhang Xuan was the most concerned about. Regarding his lack of knowledge, he could easily solve it by going through the books in the Beast Hall. More importantly.... the second phase of the beast tamer examination would take half a month by itself, not to mention the various tests he would have to undergo beforehand.

For the moment, the poison aura within his body was the topmost priority. He didn't want to waste any time here.

"This is a good opportunity, Hall Master Feng will be conducting the examination personally...."

Yun Tao didn't expect Zhang Xuan to reject the offer immediately. Thinking that this was too good an opportunity to let by, Yun Tao tried persuading him.

As long as he could impress Hall Master Feng, the Beast Hall would be willing to devote all kinds of resources to groom him. This was something that countless beast tamers dreamed about.

"I have urgent business to attend to, so I'll have to leave soon. Since you've already become a beast tamer, help me choose a good aerial savage beast. It doesn't matter to me whether I take the examination or not!" Zhang Xuan said.

"This...."

Confirming that the other party wasn't inclined to take the beast tamer examination,

Yun Tao shook his head in disappointment, "Actually, for the beast tamer examination, you just have to find a suitable savage beast to tame. It doesn't necessarily have to take half a month to complete. Besides, as an official beast tamer, not only do you get to freely choose among the aerial savage beasts, you don't have to pay any fees or whatsoever for it as well. In fact, you are allowed to change mounts freely at any Beast Halls...."

"Don't have to pay any fees?"

Before Yun Tao could finish his words, the calm Zhang Xuan from a moment ago was currently standing in front of him with glowing eyes.

"That's right. Official beast tamers have privileges. 1-star beast tamers are exempted from the fees borrowing mounts below Zongshi realm, while 2-star beast tamers are exempted from the fees of borrowing mounts at Zongshi realm, and so on. The higher your rank as a beast tamer, the more privileges you enjoy...."

Yun Tao explained. However, halfway through, Elder Zhang Xuan looked at him with a serious expression, and with a determined tone, he said,

"The fee exemption or whatsoever is just a small matter, you need not say anymore! How does the beast tamer examination work...."

"Why don't.... I try taking it on!"

Chapter 247

Soul Depth Above 10?

"Ah?"

Yun Tao couldn't react to the abrupt change before him.

Didn't he declare with determination that he wouldn't take the examination, just a moment ago? Why did he change his mind so quickly?

The moment he mentioned that there were exemptions of fees for riding aerial savage beasts, Zhang Xuan's attitude changed immediately....

Feeling overwhelmed, Yun Tao nearly choked on his saliva.

In his perspective, Elder Zhang Xuan, who was a powerful Zongshi who possessed incredible strength, shouldn't have any interest in material wealth. For his eyes to glow the moment he heard that it was free.... Cough cough, wasn't he too materialistic?

"Fine then...."

It took him much effort before he managed to swallow the saliva stuck in his throat. He was about to say something when Mo Yu xiaojie turned over, and with her head raised proudly, glanced at Zhang Xuan in disdain.

"Try taking it on? Hmph, do you think that becoming a beast tamer is a joke? You just happened to succeed in taming two savage beasts, and you think that beast taming is easy? Let me tell you, just for the commonly seen savage beasts in the world, there are already more than tens of thousand of them. Not to mention, they have their own defining characteristic, personality, habits, and other numerous other traits. Without at least a year of effort, it is impossible for you to remember them all!"

Mo Yu was still infuriated by how that fellow rejected her challenge. Upon hearing his arrogant words, she struck back immediately.

What do you mean by "try" taking it on....

Beast taming is one of the top occupations among the Upper Nine Paths. The difficulty of becoming an official beast tamer is not any lower than that of becoming an apothecary.

Do you think that this is a joke? Do you think that you can pass the examination just because you tamed two savage beasts by luck?

It is just like one wanting to become a physician just because he happened by accident to formulate a medicine which is useful toward an illness.

Dream on!

Every single occupation has its own depth and complexity. It is impossible for one to become proficient in an occupation within just a day or two.

This is especially true for beast taming. You might be able to tame savage beasts weaker than you through brute force. However, what about those with higher cultivation than you?

If you dare to disrespect them, they would destroy you in an instant.

Despite knowing nothing about the characteristics of the savage beasts, you said that you want to take on the beast tamer examination. If this isn't being arrogant, what else can it be?

"Mo Yu xiaojie, there's no need to get mad at such a haughty and ignorant person! He just happened to know the name of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow and tamed a Gold Alloyed Panther by luck, and he thinks that the world revolves around him. Given how he knows nothing about beast taming, his ignorance will surely be revealed the moment he takes the examination!"

Zhu Jinhuang stepped forward.

Beast taming is a profound art. Even if one is talented, he would require at least several years to learn the fundamentals. This fellow is definitely not an apprentice beast tamer, and from the looks of it, he hasn't really learned much about beast taming either. With those subpar skills, he wishes to take on the beast tamer examination?

"He is just a conceited fellow. A beast tamer must know more than taming savage beasts. More importantly, one has to understand the savage beasts from head to toe.

All he did was to coerce savage beasts to submit through brute force, and he thinks that he is a beast tamer already. What a joke! If that's the case, anyone can become a beast tamer!"

Zhou Xuan sneered.

The two of them were hostile toward Yun Tao. Naturally, they hoped that those around him wouldn't be able to pass the examination. Besides, that fellow had just snubbed Mo Yu xiaojie, and speaking up for her now could possibly win them some brownie points.

"Since I just happened to tame two savage beasts and know nothing at all.... then Mo Yu xiaojie, why do you want to compete with me and learn how I won the favor of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow?"

Couldn't be bothered with Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan, Zhang Xuan turned to the beautiful figure and spoke impassively.

"You...."

Mo Yu's body stiffened and her face turned red.

Given her noble standing, others usually maintained an attitude of utmost respect when speaking to her. Never had anyone dared to speak to her in such a manner. Hearing Zhang Xuan's words, she felt so furious that her words jammed in her throat.

"Lad, do you know who you're talking to? You arrogant fellow...."

"Hurry up and apologize. It is your honor to be criticized by Mo Yu xiaojie. How can you be so audacious so as to refute her words...."

Seeing how the fellow insulted their goddess, Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan felt greatly displeased. They bellowed at him immediately, but before they could finish their words, Mo Yu's expression darkened.

"Shut up! No one will take you for a mute if you don't speak!"

"Xiaojie...." Taken aback by her sudden outburst, the two of them went silent.

They were speaking up for her, yet they ended up being yelled at instead.

In any case, they knew that they had accidentally triggered Mo Yu's ire with their fawning, thus they decided not to speak anymore.

"It's this fellow's fault. I'll see how he make a fool of himself later on!"

The more they thought about it, the more furious they became. Not daring to vent their anger on their goddess, they chose to divert it all toward Zhang Xuan. As such, the more they looked at him, the more of an eyesore he became to them.

Couldn't be bothered to deal with these three fellows, Zhang Xuan followed behind Yun Tao as he walked toward Hall Master Feng.

"Hall Master Feng, Elder Zhang Xuan has agreed to take the beast tamer examination. So.... when can the examination begin?" Yun Tao asked excitedly.

He had completely confidence in this Elder Zhang Xuan.

Other people had to go through all sorts of hardship to tame a savage beast, but he was able to achieve the same feat just by beating it up. Not to mention, he was able to raise their cultivation easily. Even if it were Hall Master Feng, Yun Tao didn't believe that he was capable of doing the same.

Since he is a person of such great means, how can he possibly fail a mere beast tamer examination?

"We can start now. I heard that you haven't participated in any examination before, and you aren't even an apprentice beast tamer. Is that true?" Hall Master Feng glanced at Zhang Xuan.

"That's right!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Since you are able to tame a Pixue realm savage beast and recognize the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, this shows that you have an in-depth knowledge of beast taming. As such, I'll skip the apprentice beast tamer examination."

Hall Master Feng said.

The main purpose of the apprentice examination was to test the foundation of a person in the certain occupation. Since Zhang Xuan was able to recognize the Ancient Cloud Lightning Sparrow while the others weren't able to, Zhang Xuan was likely to be

someone who has a solid foundation in beast taming. Thus, to have him take the apprentice examination would be both troublesome and pointless.

Of course, if he were to know that Zhang Xuan didn't know anything about beast taming, he wouldn't be thinking the same.

"However, it would be hard to test your understanding of savage beasts without the apprentice examination. Since that's the case, I will remove the first phase of the beast tamer examination and, instead, add in a theoretical component to the apprentice examination."

The apprentice examination consisted of a theoretical examination and a savage beast discernment test.

On the other hand, the beast tamer examination consisted of receiving the acknowledgement of a savage beast and taming a savage beast.

Since Zhang Xuan was able to recognize a rare savage beast like the Ancient Cloud Lightning Sparrow, it could only mean that he was extremely knowledgeable in the different types of savage beasts. As such, the test on discerning savage beasts would be a complete waste of time. Also, for a person who had successfully tamed a savage beast, there was no purpose in getting him to earn the acknowledgement of a savage beast.

Thus, Hall Master Feng contemplated for a moment and decided to change the format of the examination.

"The first phase will be a theoretical examination, which will be presented in the form of a written paper. After you pass the first phase, you will have to tame a savage beast which is stronger than you! I'll be impartial in the judgement, and as long as you pass the two phases, you will be an official 1-star beast tamer."

"Alright!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Yun Tao had told him about the beast tamer examination beforehand and it was around the same as what Hall Master Feng has said. He didn't intentionally make things difficult for Zhang Xuan.

Upon seeing him agree to it, Hall Master Feng smiled. "Alright then, I will prepare the written paper now. It's a pass if you can answer all of the questions correctly!"

"Wait a moment, do you have any books on beast taming here? Can I browse through them?"

Zhang Xuan asked.

"You wish to browse through books?"

Hall Master Feng and the others stared at one another in confusion.

Why would you look at books now?

"The library over there is full of books on beast taming. Usually, only apprentice beast tamers are allowed to browse through them, but I can give you special permission to look through them now if you want. But to browse through them now...."

Hall Master Feng felt perplexed. Even though he didn't finish his final sentence, everyone knew what he was trying to say.

There are at least hundreds of thousand of books on beast taming. Isn't it a little too late to do some cramming now? It is just like looking for a wife only when one wants to have a child. Your way of doing things is unbelievable!

"Oh, it's a habit of mine. Before major events, I tend to feel a little anxious and would have to browse through books to adjust my state of mind. Thus, I will have to trouble Hall Master Feng for this matter!"

Zhang Xuan replied his doubts casually.

He used the same reason at Master Lu Chen's residence back then, and the result wasn't too bad. Thus, he decided to use it once more.

"Is that so.... Alright, the library is over there. You can head there directly!"

Hall Master Feng was unsuspecting and pointed toward the door.

"Much thanks!"

Zhang Xuan nodded before heading forward with widened strides.

It would be impossible for him to pass the beast taming examination without reading up on it. However, given that he now has access to the library, as long as he copies all of the books there into the Library of Heaven's Path, the rest would be a piece of cake.

"This fellow...."

Upon seeing Zhang laoshi agree to go ahead with the beast tamer examination, Shen Bi Ru's eyelids twitched. She could feel blood welling up in her mouth, threatening to spurt out at any moment.

Isn't this way too daring!

It wasn't that she didn't believe in the other party, just that.... along the way, he had shown his lack of knowledge in the field of beast taming time and again. In fact, it was just a moment ago that he asked her what the 'Beast Forest' was....

You don't even know the Beast Forest, yet you dare to challenge the beast tamer examination?

More importantly....

The other party would be bringing in the papers in a moment, but you're only going to start reading up now?

The heck you are up to?

"Un? Wait a moment.... The last time he was at the Compendium Pavilion in the academy, he was also flipping through the books randomly. Could it be that...."

Suddenly, Shen Bi Ru recalled the sight when the two of them was in the Compendium Pavilion.

This Zhang laoshi was flipping through the books randomly. She thought that he was doing it intentionally to attract her attention, but only after that did she realize that she had been overthinking it. The other party wasn't just flipping through the books randomly. He was actually remembering the contents of the books.

To remember contents of the books just by flipping through them haphazardly....

Can it be that Zhang laoshi really knows nothing about beast taming, and that his purpose of browsing through the books is to.... learn?

"This.... How can this be? After becoming a teacher at Hongtian Academy, he probably visited the Compendium Pavilion often to read through those books. After all, even 3-star master teachers who possess photographic memory can't possibly learn the contents of that much books within such a short period of time!"

Finding her conjecture ridiculous, Shen Bi Ru dumped it aside immediately.

It is said that if one who possesses the State of Insight of Heart of Tranquil Water has a Soul Depth of 10 and above, he would gain photographic memory. Then, the moment he flips through a book, he would be able to remember the content clearly until his death.

This is precisely the reason why the more incredible master teachers are able to immerse themselves in so many occupations and remember a vast amount of knowledge.

However.... Assuming that Zhang laoshi really possesses a Soul Depth exceeding 10, flipping through the pages of that hundreds of thousand of books one by one would still take several months!

"Can it.... can it be?"

Another thought appeared in Shen Bi Ru's mind and her body shuddered involuntarily.

Chapter 248

He Is Running!

"This is impossible...."

The moment the thought appeared in her mind, Shen Bi Ru shook her head vigorously.

She had once read on an ancient manual that in the Upper Nine Paths, other than the commonly seen occupations such as blacksmith, apothecary, and formation master, there was another mysterious occupation, seer.

Seers are skilled in divination. Using special methods, they are able to foresee the events that would happen in the near future and then make preparations for it in advance.

If Zhang Xuan were a seer, it would have been completely possible for him to know the questions in advance and flip through the corresponding books to memorize the correct answers. But if so, he didn't need to browse through all of the books in the library.

Could it be that Zhang laoshi possess talents in this mysterious occupation? If that was the case, that explained why Zhang Xuan was able to answer her questions outside the Compendium Pavilion perfectly back then.

That also explained why he knew that Yun Tao's formation couldn't confine the Gold Alloyed Panther.... Now that she thought of it, this might really be the case!

Just that....

This occupation exists only in the legends. According to the ratio stated in the books, out of billions of cultivators, there might not even be a single seer. Given the absurd rarity of the occupation, nearly no one has ever seen a seer.

If Zhang Xuan possessed such abilities, he could have avoided scoring a zero in his Teacher Qualification Examination, and he wouldn't have suffered so much afterward either.

Besides, divination only allows one to foresee the rough outline of affairs that is about to happen. It is impossible to peer into the specific questions of the examinations and make preparations for them beforehand!

Shen Bi Ru's eyebrows knitted tightly together as she mused over the matter. The more she thought about it, the more confused she became.

She thought that she knew this Zhang laoshi well, but from the looks of it, all she had seen was just the tip of the glacier.

After deriving nothing at all after a long period of contemplation, her curiosity toward Zhang laoshi grew.

At this moment, she finally understood why Han Qiong said she wasn't worthy of the other party. While she was beautiful and possessed quite some talent, Zhang Xuan was simply out of her league.

As her thoughts were wandering around the place, Zhu Jinhuan and Zhou Xuan were staring at Zhang Xuan's back with widened eyes.

"This fellow.... Is he mad? To only start reading right before the examination?"

"There must be something wrong with his head. What use is there to browse through books now?"

The two of them muttered as they sneaked glances toward Mo Yu. There were deep creases on her forehead, and it was a mystery to them what she was thinking about.

They were about to walk up to fawn on her when their goddess turned around and walked in the library's direction.

"Mo Yu xiaojie...." The duo hurriedly followed behind her.

"Stay here! I will break the legs of whoever who follows me!"

Harrumphing coldly, Mo Yu turned around and headed straight for the library.

"Damn it, damn it!"

Hearing Princess Mo Yu berate the two of them because of a fellow she had just met,

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan's faces reddened in anger.

But before their rage could burn for long, Mo Yu xiaojie returned to the examination hall. She was muttering something beneath her breath, and there was a bizarre expression on her face.

The two of them stared at one another in confusion. They were curious about what she was saying, but fearful of angering the other party, they could only remain where they were and scratch their heads in frustration.

After a short period, they finally came to the limit of their patience. Zhu Jinhuang beckoned a guard over and whispered into his ear.

The guard then circled around the room and appeared behind Mo Yu. After listening in to her words for a moment, he returned with an equally bizarre expression.

"What did Princess Mo Yu say?"

Upon the guard's return, the duo asked anxiously.

"She.... kept saying flipping through books, flipping through books, flipping through books.... As for her other words, I didn't manage to catch them!"

The guard scratched his head.

"Flipping through books?"

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan stared at one another. They could see bewilderment in each other's faces, and at the same time, a thought appeared in their minds....

Can it be that.... their goddess has gone insane?

....

Oblivious to the fact that the goddess of the duo was in a frenzy because of him, Zhang Xuan was, at the moment, engaged the action which Mo Yu kept mumbling about, flipping through books.

He thought that there would at most be tens of thousand of books on beast taming here. However, upon walking into the library, he realized how childish his thoughts

were. Looking at the dense congregation of books around him, there was surely no less than several hundred thousand books.

Even though it wasn't as large as Tianxuan Kingdom's Book Collection Vault, it wasn't far from it.

If he were to use his usual method, several days would have passed before he could manage to flip through them all.

He thought that the beast tamer examination would be easy, and that he would be able to finish it swiftly. If he were to spend several days flipping through books, even if he doesn't go mad, Hall Master Feng and the others waiting outside would go mad.

Usually, people only spend a maximum of four hours to adjust their state of mind for examinations. If he were to take several days at a single go and emerge with bloodshot eyes, everyone would realise that something is amiss.

"But if I don't flip through all of these books, the Library of Heaven's Path won't be able to compile a corresponding book. If the knowledge within that book which I missed out were to be tested, I will fail the examination...."

Zhang Xuan frowned. "If so, I wouldn't be able to enjoy the free rental that beast tamers enjoy...."

Even though Zhang Xuan possessed over ten million gold coins in his storage ring, he had already cultivated frugal habits as a result of being an average librarian in his previous life.... If he has the chance to save money, he would definitely seize it!

This was no longer a matter of money, but principles!

"The Library of Heaven's Path allows me to view the information and flaws of an object just by touching it. If I were to touch this bookshelf.... Will the content of the books on it appear as well?"

Going by his usual pace, it would be impossible for him to finish flipping through so many books within a few hours. Thus, he had to look for another method. With a deep frown on his forehead, an idea suddenly appeared in his head.

With a touch of his finger, he was able to compile a book on any objects, unconscious people, and unconscious savage beasts.

Since these books were placed on a bookshelf, was it possible for all of the content of the books to appear in the Library of Heaven's Path just by touching the bookshelf?

"I should give it a try!"

Zhang Xuan walked up to a bookshelf, touched the bookshelf, and mentally echoed 'flaws'.

Hu!

The library jolted and a book appeared. Flipping it open, Zhang Xuan's body swayed and he nearly vomited blood.

Written in the book is: Xuanluo Mountain Range Beast Hall 3rd row bookshelf. Crafted by a 1-mo craftsman using camphor wood. It has 37 years of....

"This is not what I want...."

Zhang Xuan nearly burst into tears.

Clearly, only when an object comes into direct contact in his hands would information and flaws be generated. There were no shortcuts around it.

"Un? That's not right. If information is generated when an object comes in contact with my fingers, then.... even if I don't flip through these books, just by touching it, a corresponding book should be compiled as well, right?"

Before long, another thought popped into Zhang Xuan's mind.

The duration of contact didn't matter. As long as Zhang Xuan willed for the flaws of an object to be shown, a book would be compiled. If so, it should be possible for Zhang Xuan to compile corresponding books just by brief contact.

"I should try it out...."

Zhang Xuan walked over to a pile of books and, yelling 'flaws' in his head, his fingers slid past over them.

Huhuhu!

Zhang Xuan was still considering whether its usefulness when the library jolted, a pile of new books appearing in his consciousness.

"It works?"

Zhang Xuan's face reddened in agitation. He flipped open the compiled book quickly, and verified that the content of the original book was imprinted perfectly on it along with the various flaws.

"It's workable!"

Crying tears of happiness, Zhang Xuan carried out several more tries more in order to confirm the situation.

As long as he willed for flaws to appear, he would be able to duplicate the books his fingers slid past in the Library of Heaven's Path.

This was more than a hundred times faster than flipping through the books.

Zhang Xuan was able to flip through more than a dozen books at once, but retrieving and returning the books from and to the shelves consumed much of his time. Now that Zhang Xuan had confirmed that he could duplicate a book just by touching it, he could slide his fingers over the books without even moving the books from their original positions. As such, he was able to compile an entire shelf of books in less than a minute.

However, due to the rapid pace of collecting the books, the intense tremor in the library would cause Zhang Xuan's head to hurt. He was therefore unable to compile all of the books at a single go. Usually, after duplicating the books on several shelves, he would have to take a rest.

Even so, his speed was much faster than before.

At his current pace, he would only need around two hours to finish duplicating all of the books present.

"Let's go!"

Zhang Xuan was delighted at finding an efficient way in collecting books. As he mentally yelled 'flaws', he ran alongside the shelves as his fingers slid on the books.

After finishing a row, he would double check the books in the Library of Heaven's Path to see if he had missed out any. If so, he would return to add it in.

As he collected more and more books, Zhang Xuan's understanding toward beast taming increased swiftly.

....

"Hall Master Feng, are you done preparing the papers?"

In the room, Beast Tamer Lu and Beast Tamer Wang, upon seeing Hall Master Feng walk over, turned to look at him.

"Un!" Hall Master Feng nodded his head. "Characteristics of hundreds of savage beasts are tested in this examination, and I hadn't gone easy on him at all. If he can answer all of these questions accurately, then his proficiency in beast taming is truly incredible."

"Since he is able to identify the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow, he should be well-versed in the knowledge of savage beasts. I think that there's a high probability of him passing the examination." Beast Tamer Lu said.

"Indeed. Our Beast Hall often ranks among the last in the competition because of our remote location and lack of talents. If a genius were to appear in our Beast Hall and win the competition, we might be able to successfully advance to become a 3-star beast tamer as part of the rewards!"

Hall Master Feng's eyes glowed in excitement.

"That's right. But we shouldn't rush the matter, let's wait for the results of the examination first!" Beast Tamer Wang said. "Honestly speaking, I think that Yun Tao had exaggerated his achievements. I find it hard to believe that a person can tame a Pixue realm savage beast within ten minutes!"

"I also find it hard to believe, but I've questioned Yun Tao's subordinates as well. All of their replies are the same, and they don't seem to be lying. Even if he isn't as amazing as Yun Tao put him out to be, he probably isn't too far from it."

Beast Tamer Lu replied.

"No matter what, this is an opportunity. If he disappoints us, we will just have to continue looking for another candidate. Ah right, is Zhang Xuan still browsing through books in the library?"

At this moment, Hall Master Feng suddenly noticed Zhang Xuan's absence and frowned.

"He isn't out yet!" Beast Tamer Lu nodded.

"Xiao Zhu, you take a look!"

Hall Master Feng commanded.

Xiao Zhu was an apprentice which was currently learning beast taming under him. Hearing his commands, Xiao Zhu rushed into the library. Then a moment later, he returned with a flushed face. He opened his mouth to speak, only to close it hesitantly.

"Why? Is he still browsing through books?"

Upon seeing the expression on his apprentice, Hall Master Feng frowned in confusion. For his usually calm apprentice to behave in such a manner, what could have happened?

"That's not it...."

With an awkward expression, Xiao Zhu said, "H-he is in the library.... running!"

Chapter 249

Discourse

"Running?"

"Running inside the library?"

Hall Master Feng and the others questioned immediately if they had heard wrongly. They turned to look at Xiao Zhu with a perplexed expression.

If you say that he is browsing through books or meditating in the library, I will be able to accept it. But running....

Hall Master Feng blinked, "Could you have seen wrongly?"

The library is full of bookshelves, it wouldn't be convenient to run in there!

More importantly, since he was able to beat up a Pixue realm savage beast, his cultivation realm should be rather high as well. How fast does he have to run for it to be of any use to his cultivation?

"Could it be related to some beast taming methods? Maybe it is about catching up to some savage beasts?"

Beast Tamer Wang asked doubtfully.

"He.... isn't running quickly but merely at the pace of an ordinary human. Also, he seemed to be mumbling something while running around. However, as he is too far away, I couldn't really make out what he was saying."

Xiao Zhu said in embarrassment.

He didn't feel comfortable speaking about what he had seen just now, fearful that someone might take him for a lunatic.

For a person who went to the library to adjust his state of mind to be running about

while mumbling something.... No one would ever think of it to be possible.

"Running, mumbling?"

This time, the three beast tamers were truly baffled.

They thought so hard that they were about to claw out their head, but even so, they were unable to understand.... what in world has running got to do with adjusting his state of mind!

Honestly speaking, the first idea that would pop into anyone's mind upon hearing about the other party's actions is.... wrecking havoc!

If he isn't trying to wreck havoc, then what? Who in the world adjusts his state of mind like that?

Furthermore, to do it in the library.....

Given how big the examination hall is, do you think that there isn't any space for you to run here? Besides, if you find this space small, there is a savage beast activity site which is several kilometers long. You won't be able to reach the other end even if you were to do somersaults for half an hour straight....

"No, I should go in to take a look. There are too many precious manuals in the library. I can't allow them to get damaged because of him!"

After pondering of a moment, Hall Master Feng thought that he couldn't let this matter be.

Given how the other party was running about in the room, he was likely to not be in his right mind. If he were to suddenly set the library ablaze, it would be too late for tears then.

He mustn't allow such a thing to happen!

With a grim expression, he walked straight toward the library. But at that moment, a young man walked over, his face full of fatigue.

Zhang Xuan.

The current Zhang Xuan was completely different from how he was an hour ago. Regardless of whether his mental state or his physical body, he appeared clearly worn out. It seemed as though he had just undergone a torturous training, and that the energy in his body had been sapped dry.

"Are you alright?"

Hall Master Feng couldn't help but approach him.

When others adjust their state of mind, they would enter their peak condition. On the other hand, this fellow seemed as if he had spent an entire night engaging in physical exercise. Are you sure you are adjusting your state of mind, not wearing your mind out?

"Oh, I'm alright. Is the paper ready? Let's begin!"

Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually.

Even though he had managed to imprint all of the books in the library into the Library of Heaven's Path swiftly through the new method he discovered, due to the excessive amount of content inserted within a short period of time, the reverberation on his head was too great, causing him to become slightly faint-headed.

At this moment, he felt as though he hadn't slept for five days. He was fatigued from head to toe.

"So.... do you want to start now?"

Seeing that the other party was having trouble opening his eyes, Hall Master Feng couldn't help but ask, "Are you sure?"

"I'm sure!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Fine then. Let's go over there, the Record Crystal is out of range here." Hall Master Feng nodded.

Regardless of whether it was for the apothecary examination or the beast tamer examination, for the sake of fairness, a Record Crystal would be used to record the

entire process, such that those who doubt the impartiality of the examination could check on it.

Soon, they arrived at the center of the room where the Record Crystal was located. Hall Master Feng and the other two beast tamers sat down.

Upon seeing them sitting down, everyone knew what was going to happen. They immediately burst into discussions.

"The examination is about to start!"

"Right! He is skipping the apprentice examination and going straight for the beast tamer examination. This is the privilege given only to the topmost geniuses. Even Mo Yu xiaojie didn't enjoy such a benefit. I would like to see if the fellow would dare to remain in this place once he fails!"

"He just happened to tame a few savage beasts by luck, do you think he possesses true capabilities? I think that he will fail for sure!"

"The first test assesses his theoretical knowledge. Without several years of study, it is impossible for one to remember the countless savage beasts in the world and their characteristics. Back then, in order to remember them all, our prince made to read through the books everyday. This fellow isn't even twenty. Even if he were to start studying from his mother's womb, how much content can he remember?"

"He is trying to attract attention. I doubt that he has any true ability...."

....

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was about to take the examination, everyone immediately crowded over, and many of their gazes were filled with derision.

It has been long since someone had skipped the apprentice examination and gone straight for the beast tamer examination. Green with envy, most of them hoped that Zhang Xuan would fail.

This was especially so for Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang. Due to their relationship with Yun Tao and Mo Yu xiaojie, they were filled with hatred for this fellow. They would love it if Zhang Xuan were to make a mockery of himself.

If the other party were unable to even pass the theoretical examination, becoming a beast tamer.... would be nothing but a dream!

Amidst the commotion, Mo Yu was also brought back to reality. She stepped forward and glanced at the young man coldly.

With just a single glance, her eyebrows shot up.

What is wrong with this fellow?

Just a moment ago, he was flipping through books spiritedly. But now.... Why does he seem as though he had been sucked dry?

The others could tell that something was amiss with Zhang Xuan as well. Shen Bi Ru exchanged glances with Yun Tao, and deep creases appeared on their foreheads.

"Zhang laoshi, are you alright?"

"I'm fine!" Zhang Xuan nodded. "It's just that I'm a little exhausted!"

To duplicate that huge collection of book in less than two hours into the Library of Heaven's Path took up a lot of his energy. Not only did he have to keep willing for 'flaws' to appear, the tremor in his mind whenever a book was compiled took a toll on him. It would be truly weird if he were to appear spirited instead.

In his current condition, it was a wonder that he could still remain standing.

"Elder, if you aren't feeling well, why don't we rest for a bit and take the examination tomorrow?" Yun Tao asked.

The person before him was potentially a Zongshi realm expert. What in the world did he go through for him to be so exhausted?

"It's no problem...."

Knowing that they were simply expressing their concern, Zhang Xuan was about to reject them politely when a cold sneer echoed.

"I think he is intentionally feigning it. Maybe his actual intention of heading into the library is to read up on the beast taming books, and upon realizing the difficulty of the

examination, he decided to feign weakness to avoid the examination!"

The one who spoke was Zhu Jinhuang.

There was blatant contempt in his eyes, and it seemed as though he was resolute to uncover a fraud's disguise.

"There must be the case! How is it possible to become so withered after reading just a few books? Pardon me for my ignorance, but this is my first time hearing of such a thing!" Zhou Xuan took this opportunity to get back at Zhang Xuan.

"This...."

"Now that they spoke of it, it does seem possible."

"He was probably confident until he started flipping through the books and realized how profound the art of beast taming is. Fearful, but not wanting to disgrace himself, he decided to come up with an excuse...."

"That must be the case...."

Most of the crowd thought that the words of the duo were logical and agreed with their view.

If that's not the case, how can a simple trip to adjust his mental state result in him returning as though he was on the verge of death?

He seemed so exhausted that it was as if he could collapse at any moment....

It is impossible for someone to become so tired just by reading books.... Since this situation can't be explained, only a single possibility is left. He is feigning it.

"There's no need for it. We can start now!"

Hearing the doubts and discussions in the surrounding, Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

"This is the paper that I just came up with. You have an hour to complete it, and you will pass the examination if you score full marks. You may start now!"

Seeing him persist, Hall Master Feng decided to say nothing. Instead, he passed a huge

stack of paper to Zhang Xuan.

Just like the written paper in the apprentice apothecary examination, it was dozens of pages thick. It would take a long time just to write an answer to every single question, not to mention the effort required to think through every question carefully in order to ensure that the answers are correct.

Zhang Xuan lowered his head to glance at the papers, only to see all kinds of questions on the fundamental knowledge of beast taming on it. The questions covered all aspects of beast taming, and without sufficient knowledge, one might not even understand the questions.

"Alright, you can begin answering. The time starts now!"

Seeing Zhang Xuan receive the papers, Hall Master Feng gestured grandly and said.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan placed the papers on the desk and picked up a brush. He was about to begin answering when he felt his head ring. His entire hand seemed to be trembling uncontrollably.

The rapid pace at which he duplicated the books into the Library of Heaven's Path had really taken a toll on him. Due to his insufficient cultivation, not only was he drained mentally, his body took a huge toll as well.

It would probably take at least an hour of rest before he can recover.

But he didn't have the time for it now.

If he were to rest for an hour, it would be impossible for him to finish that thick stack of papers. Even with the assistance of the Library of Heaven's Path, it was an impossible feat.

As long as he were to answer a question wrongly, he would fail the beast tamer examination. Failing and embarrassing himself was a small matter. More importantly.... He would be unable to enjoy the privilege of a free ride. That was something he couldn't tolerate.

"Look, he seems to be so tired that he can't even hold the brush!"

"Hehe, do you believe that a cultivator whose cultivation exceeds Pixue realm can be

so tired as to be unable to hold a brush? It must be an act!"

"That must be the case! He must have seen the questions and felt that it is beyond him. That's why he chose to feign weakness.... Honestly speaking, this is the kind of people that I despise the most!"

"Who doesn't despise such people?"

Seeing how Zhang Xuan's fingers were trembling to the point where he was unable to grip his brush properly, everyone harrumphed coldly.

Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, and the others stared at one another doubtfully.

Can that really be the case?

But it isn't logical for Zhang Xuan to be so exhausted just by running about the library!

"Zhang Xuan, if you feel that you aren't in a condition to answer the questions, I can allow you to rest for a day and start tomorrow."

After confirming visually that the fellow before him was to be in a bad state to answer the paper, Hall Master Feng couldn't stand it further and said.

Sighing, with trembling hands, Zhang Xuan placed the brush down.

The other party was right. Even if he were to force himself to write, his words would likely be illegible given his current condition.

More importantly.... His speed wouldn't be sufficient. It was likely that he would have to stop to rest after writing a few lines. It was impossible for him to finish the paper like that.

If Zhang Xuan wanted to pass the examination without wasting a day resting here.... There was only one last option!

Sighing, Zhang Xuan lifted his head and looked forward.

"Hall Master Feng, the two beast tamers, I am not in a condition to hold a brush. Can I opt for a discourse instead?"

"Discourse?"

The three beast tamers stood up in astonishment. Disbelief was reflected in their eyes.

"Wha-What did you say? You wish to take on the most difficult form of the theoretical examination.... discourse?"

Chapter 250

Can You Lend Me Your Tamed Beast?

Discourse is the most difficult mode of assessment in the beast tamer theoretical examination.

Instead of answering using a brush, one answered by speaking with his mouth.

When answering through writing, one is free to contemplate over the question for as long as they wish. Even if they were to write wrongly, they are able to change their answers. However, a discourse is not like that.

The examinees aren't given thinking time or an opportunity to change their answers. The moment it starts, the examinee will have to answer all questions correctly. If he were to spout a single erroneous word, it would mean his failure.

This examination model is similar to the Pill Debate of the Apothecary Guild. It is specially prepared for master teachers so as to reduce the time required for the examination. At the same time, it assesses how well-versed one was in the knowledge of beast taming, as well as how fast one can access that knowledge.

A normal written theoretical examination takes two hours while a discourse is only an hour long.

Even so, the difficulty of a discourse is way higher than that of a written paper. It has high demands on a person's reaction speed and their grasp on their knowledge. Virtually no one dares to take it on, and there is no need for them to do so too. As such, for the past thousand years since this branch's founding, no one had ever taken up the challenge.

Hall Master Feng and the others didn't expect that this fellow, who seemed as though he would collapse at any moment, would choose to challenge the beast tamer examination in this format!

"Yes!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"You should think it through. You aren't allowed thinking time during a discourse, and the moment you make a mistake, you will be disqualified...." Hall Master Feng advised.

"I understand, but I'm really too tired to use a brush. Thus, I can only opt for this method!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

"Since you insist, let's start then!" Seeing the determination in Zhang Xuan's eyes, Hall Master Feng decided to follow his wishes. Thus, he stepped forward, retrieved the examination papers, and looked at Zhang Xuan. "Tell me about the defining characteristics of Gold Armored Steel Fang Beast!"

"The Gold Armored Steel Fang Beast is a Pixue realm savage beast whose entire body is covered by golden scales, providing it with powerful defensive ability. It usually dwells in the marshlands or near mountain streams, feeding on Green Bamboo Grass which grows around that area. Also, it is nocturnal.... This is what Senior Hu Yao mentions as in "Stratagem to Beast Taming". In the "Encyclopedia on Gold Armored Steel Fang Beast" written by Beast Tamer Bai Zhen, his descriptions of the savage beast are slightly different from Senior Hu Yao. Based on his observations, the Gold Armored Steel Fang Beast prefers cooling places. As such, it often lives in shadowy places where the sun doesn't reach...."

"Thirty years ago, numerous outstanding seniors of the Beast Hall gathered the theories of all of the predecessors and after many years of research, they realized that the Gold Armored Steel Fang Beasts spoken of weren't of the same species. There is a total of three different species, namely the Marsh Steel Fang Beast which resides in the marshlands, the Mountain Steel Fang Beast which lives near mountain streams, and the Shadow Steel Fang Beast which dwells in the colder regions."

"There are clear differences between these three Steel Fang Beasts. Firstly, the scales in the center of their foreheads are different. Secondly, the structure of their tails is different.... If you wish to check on my answer, you can browse through the "Detailed Explanation on Gold Armored Steel Fang Beasts" left behind by them. It is toward the left of the 17th bookshelf in the library!"

Zhang Xuan replied calmly.

"His answer is.... completely correct!"

The Gold Armored Steel Fang Beast was a rare savage beast. Furthermore, its

classification was extremely confusing. Most people would only be able to recall basic characteristics about the savage beast, and the examiner would have already considered their answers to be correct. However, not only did Zhang Xuan provide a complete answer, he even introduced the various books left behind by the senior beast tamers, even.... pointing out the exact locations of those books....

The heck, is he really just a human?

The crowd widened their eyes in shock. The entire room was deathly silent.

"The defining characteristics of Steelbacked Monkey!"

"The Steelbacked Monkey has a massive spinal bone that towers up high. Most of the strength the Steelbacked Monkey possesses originates from its unique bone. Also, it possesses large feet which grant it swift speed. Even though it is a monkey, it is unable to scale trees. Instead, its body structure resembles larger ape-like savage beasts.... These defining characteristics are recorded in "Zashan's Savage Beasts Exposition". Senior Zashan is a famous beast tamer of the Beast Hall 140 years ago...."

Before everyone could recover, Hall Master Feng posed another question, and without any hesitation, the young man answered once more.

Just like that, with a person asking questions and the other one answering them, the discourse proceeded extremely swiftly. Most of the time, while the crowd was still pondering whether the answer to the question was correct or not, the next question was already answered.

In the eyes of the crowd, this young man who wasn't in his twenties yet felt like an answer sheet. Not only were his answers detailed, he even listed out the various possibilities and theories written in the books out.

There wasn't a single flaw that could be picked out in his answers.

"Completely correct!"

"Completely correct!"

"The River Worm's living habitat.... correct!"

"Why the Three Stream River and the Erudite Bird is unable to co-exist.... correct!"

....

As Hall Master Feng raised question after question, the replies he received left him in so much so much shock that his mind was about to go blank.

Initially, he thought that the other party only happened to know the answer to the questions he raised. As long as he increased the difficulty later on, the other party would surely be unable to reply so swiftly.

However.... Despite the other party seeming as though he was on the verge of fainting, his replies only came faster and faster. Hall Master Feng felt as though he was unable to keep up with the situation.

More importantly....

Not only was he fast, his answer was flawless.

If Hall Master Feng didn't see it for himself, he wouldn't dare believe it to be true. To think that there would be such a monster in the world!

It was no wonder why the other party could recognize the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow. In terms of fundamental knowledge on savage beasts, it was likely that Zhang Xuan far surpassed the three 2-star beast tamers.

"This.... This is impossible!"

"These questions are.... so difficult!"

While the three 2-star beast tamers were overwhelmed by shock, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang were dumbfounded by the sight before them. They could see the fear in each other's eyes.

The questions which Hall Master Feng just raised were of such great difficulty that even they would be unable to answer them.

It wasn't that their fundamental knowledge of savage beasts was weak. Rather, in several questions, the defining characteristics of the savage beast were extremely similar. With just the slightest lapse in judgment, they would make an error.

For example, the River Worm which was just mentioned may sound like an insect, but

it is actually an extremely powerful savage beast. Its bones grow on its surface and it possesses immense strength.

Yet, such a ferocious and immense savage beast is able to float on the surface of the river. Most people would think that this savage beast lives on the surface of the water upon hearing the word 'river'. Yet, contrary to all expectations, the habitat it is compatible with is the mountains....

None of the questions that Hall Master Feng raised was simple. Even on a written paper, they would have to contemplate for a long period before they can jot down their answer. On the other hand, the other party is able to answer immediately, as though he didn't need to muse over the question at all....

How does he do it?

Putting aside them, even the super genius Mo Yu would be incapable of answering such a question on the spot!

This is the performance of someone who had assimilated all of the fundamental knowledge thoroughly into his bones!

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan shuddered.

They actually accused a person of such greatness of knowing nothing at all and putting on an act?

Compared to him, the knowledge they had was laughably pathetic.

While passing the apprentice theoretical examination through discourse and written paper seemed like the same thing, as someone who had studied beast taming for several years, they knew that it wasn't that simple.

Often, while taming a savage beast, unexpected situations would occur. Under such circumstances, one would have to swiftly organize the situation and knowledge in their arsenal to decide on the optimal course of action.

Every second count. If they were to miss the timing, it is likely for the situation to complicate, causing the difficulty of the taming process to multiply several folds.

This is precisely the reason why a beast tamer who passed the theoretical examination

through discourse is highly respected by the others.

Every single beast tamer who passed the discourse eventually went on to achieve incredible feats.

Initially, they thought that Zhang Xuan was only a clown who wished to make a name for himself. Never in their dreams could they have imagined that.... not only did were his answers perfect, he didn't even need to think at all....

This isn't something a human can do!

While the two of them were trembling in fear, Shen Bi Ru's mouth was wide opened.

The fellow who didn't know what the Beast Forest was two hours ago was now spouting innumerable theories and facts as though they were nothing at all. No matter how foolish she could be, it was clear that something was amiss.

"Does he really.... possess the talent of a seer?"

If it were just a doubt to her before, at this moment, she was completely certain of it.

How could he have answered all of the questions so swiftly if he didn't know the questions beforehand?

On the other hand, a frown was etched on Mo Yu's forehead. Doubt flashed across her eyes as she pondered.

"....This is all. Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, Beast Tamer Wang, are my answers correct?"

After a moment, Zhang Xuan finally finished answering the final question and smiled at them.

"Your.... answers are completely correct!"

The three of them glanced at one another before Hall Master Feng nodded his head.

The other party had answered all of the questions in the theoretical examination in less than an hour. Not only so, he even brought up the history of how the answers were derived.

They couldn't help but admire how detailed and precise his answers were.

"Since you've answered all of the questions correctly, you've passed the first test!"

It didn't take long for Hall Master Feng to announce the result. Then, he gazed at Zhang Xuan once more and said, "Since you've passed the first test, let's go on to the second one, taming a savage beast. You have half a month, and you only have to achieve Inceptive Taming to pass."

"Half a month? That's too long.... Do you keep any untamed savage beast here? Can you allow me to tame it?"

Even though there are countless savage beasts in Xuanluo Mountain Range, it isn't easy to find a specific one which fits the examination criteria. If Zhang Xuan were to head out to look for one, it would definitely take up plenty of time. Since he is in the Beast Hall now, there is likely to be a suitable savage beast.

As he said so, Zhang Xuan stood up. Throughout the duration of the discourse, Zhang Xuan's fatigued physical body had recovered slightly.

Even though his condition remained nonoptimal, he was clearly in a much better state than before.

"Allow you to tame it?"

Hearing those words, everyone became speechless.

"What a joke! Every single savage beast is valuable, how can we possibly allow you to tame it? Besides, only tamed beasts are allowed to enter the Beast Hall! Otherwise, if a stampede were to occur, no one would be able to bear responsibility!"

Hearing Zhang Xuan spout such amateurish words, Mo Yu harrumphed coldly in displeasure.

"Is that the case...."

Zhang Xuan shook his head. He didn't expect the beast tamer examination to turn out to be so troublesome. Where in the world can he look for an untamed savage beast now?

"Ah, right! Can I borrow your Viridescent Eagle to tame?"

Suddenly, a thought flashed in Zhang Xuan's mind. He immediately turned to Mo Yu and asked.

Chapter 251

Beast Pummeling Taming Method

The savage beasts in the Beast Hall are those brought back by beast tamers after great efforts to tame them. As such, they are considered as private possessions.

Most beast tamers regard their savage beasts as their wives, and Zhang Xuan's request for wanting to borrow a tamed savage beast was no different from borrowing another person's wife to play with. Everyone stared at him as though staring at an idiot.

Mo Yu nearly exploded on the spot.

Borrowing my savage beast to tame?

How in the world did he think of such an idea?

How can taming a wild savage beast be the same as taming a tamed beast?

Taming the latter is several times harder than taming a wild savage beast.

Even though she had only accomplished Inceptive Taming with the Viridescent Eagle, she had already interacted with it for seven to eight days and had agreed to many of its difficult demands. Throughout the days that the both of them were together, a deep and strong bond had already sprouted between them.

The Loyalty Level of the Viridescent Eagle had already reached 30 and wasn't too far from 31 to achieve Advanced Taming.

Besides, this Viridescent Eagle is arrogant and hates interacting with humans. It was the work of numerous coincidences that allowed her to tame it.

Yet, this fellow said that he wanted to borrow it from her to tame it....

Do you think that this is a joke?

She felt so stifled that she was about to go on a frenzy.

She had become so impressed with the solid fundamental knowledge of the other party and thought that he was a beast taming genius when he immediately spoke the words of an amateur.

Borrow? Borrow your head! This is my first time I'm hearing that one can borrow a savage beast to tame!

Why don't you borrow another person's wife to play with instead?

She narrowed her eyes and sneered coldly. Just as she was about to reprimand the other party for his thoughtless words, Zhu Jinhuang walked up and whispered into her ears.

"Mo Yu xiaojie, I think that it's a good idea to lend the Viridescent Eagle for him to tame!"

"What did you say?"

Mo Yu glared at Zhu Jinhuang ferociously. It seemed as though if his answer didn't please her, she would immediately fly into a rage.

"You have already tamed the Viridescent Eagle, and its Loyalty Level has also reached 30. It is definitely impossible for him to tame it! Isn't this fellow acting arrogantly and gleefully? You should give him a try, and once he fails, he would definitely be embarrassed!"

Zhu Jinhuang harrumphed.

"Indeed. Even a 2-star pinnacle beast tamer like Hall Master Feng is unable to tame a tamed beast. Despite not being a beast tamer, he is speaking such arrogant words. I think that we should teach him a lesson!"

Zhou Xuan chirped in.

"This...."

Hearing the words of the two, Mo Yu hesitated for a moment before nodding her head.

She felt that their words made sense. It is technically impossible to tame a tamed beast.

Since this fellow is acting so impudently, it isn't anything to let him embarrass himself.

As she thought so, she harrumphed coldly and looked at Zhang Xuan. "You wish to borrow my Viridescent Eagle? Here it is. If you can tame it, I'll allow you to have it."

"Are you serious?"

Zhang Xuan was only asking casually, he hadn't expected the other party to agree to his request. With glowing eyes, he turned to look at Hall Master Feng and the others, "If I were to tame this Viridescent Eagle, will it be considered as a pass for the second test?"

"This.... Yes, it can be considered as a pass!"

Hall Master Feng nodded. He had a bizarre expression on his face.

This fellow had just shown his vast knowledge on beast taming through the discourse. Why did he become an ignorant amateur all of a sudden?

This Viridescent Eagle is clearly extremely fond of Mo Yu, and it is just a matter of time before it submits completely to her. Yet, you want to try to tame it.... Aren't you looking for trouble?

You are wasting time like this. You might as well head out and look for a wild savage beast.

"Good!"

After the moment of rest, Zhang Xuan has roughly recovered from the toll from duplicating those books. Chuckling, he walked forward to the Viridescent Eagle.

"Little eagle, your master has already lent you to me. You should hurry up and submit to me!"

"Qiu!"

A Tongxuan realm savage beast like it is capable of understanding human speech. Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's words, it exploded into a rage.

This is blatant provocation!

Other people brought it good food, entertainment, and all kinds of treasures when trying to tame me. Yet, you came to me empty-handed. More importantly.... What's with this attitude?

Acting as though it is my fortune to be able to submit to you....

Pui!

The furious Viridescent Eagle patted its raised its giant wings and smacked it straight at Zhang Xuan.

Hula!

The wind blew violently. The resilient wings and the sharp feathers cut through the air as though a sharp knife, causing the air to shrill.

This fellow is a Tongxuan realm savage beast, and its fighting prowess is much stronger than an average Tongxuan realm cultivator. The air seemed to part wherever the wings passed by. Everyone's face immediately turned pale as they stepped backward.

It would be difficult for a Pixue realm expert to even withstand the shock wave from its movement, needless to say, face it head on.

Hu!

Even as everyone retreated backward, Zhang Xuan's expression remained completely calm. With a slight sway of his body, he was already seven to eight meters away, thus dodging the attack.

Pipa!

A dozen meters long crack appeared on the tough bluestone ground after being struck by the wings.

The bluestone ground was something the Beast Hall purchased from Baiyu City at an exorbitant price. Even a Pixue realm pinnacle expert would find it difficult to leave a mark with a punch from their fists. Yet, with a slight sweep from the Viridescent Eagle's wings, such a huge crack appeared.

"Strong...."

Yun Tao and the others turned pale.

If it were them, they would surely have been unable to dodge the attack in time. They would have been struck to death in an instant.

"If you continue, don't blame me for not going easy on you!"

In contrast to everyone's fear, Zhang Xuan frowned in displeasure.

Qiu!

Upon hearing those words and seeing the expression in Zhang Xuan's face, the Viridescent Eagle was enraged further. Flapping its wings, it flew into the air and struck at Zhang Xuan with its sharp claws.

The two most powerful moves of the Viridescent Eagle are the Wing Sweep and Steel Claw.

The second move is much stronger than the first one. Furthermore, it has a flight advantage, and the momentum from its swoop downwards adds to its force. Even a Half-Zongshi expert would find it hard to deal with this move unprepared.

"One wouldn't die if they don't court death. You shouldn't have been so arrogant in the first place!"

"To even dare to taunt a Viridescent Eagle, you deserve it!"

Zhu Jinhuang, Zhou Xuan, and the others sneered coldly.

Even their strongest guards were unable to withstand this powerful move from the Viridescent Eagle. They didn't believe that this youngster who wasn't even in his twenties yet could survive the attack.

"The moment he is grabbed by those claws, even if he isn't torn apart, he will surely sustain severe injuries!"

"With this move, the Viridescent Eagle is able to unleash a might exceeding 500 ding, and that is comparable to a Half-Zongshi. The only way to deal with this move is to

avoid it!"

No one could have imagined that this lad would be so good at incurring the ire of others. With just a few words, he caused the Viridescent Eagle to fly into a rage. Upon seeing it use its powerful steel claws, everyone grew anxious.

There are innumerable cases of beast tamers killed while trying to tame a savage beast.

However, it was unheard of for a person to be killed by a savage beast in the Beast Hall.

Just when everyone thought that misfortune would befall Zhang Xuan, his calm voice echoed.

"Since you're unwilling to listen, I've no other choice!"

As he spoke, he clenched his fist and faced the other party's claws straight on.

"Ah?"

Everyone shuddered.

The claws of the Viridescent Eagle are more than capable of smashing through steel. Yet, to face it with his fists....

Peng!

Before anyone could recover from their terror, the fist and the claw had met.

Everyone was expecting the youngster would fracture his arm and suffer grievous wounds when the haughty Viridescent Eagle suddenly released a shrill scream. As though struck by a massive mountain, it was unable to control its body and fell from the skies.

Pu!

It crashed heavily on the ground. At this moment, everyone could see its distorted claws.

"Ah?"

Everyone exclaimed in astonishment.

'Ah', the same exclamation, but one was in fear while the other one was in shock. They felt as though their moods were on a roller coaster ride, flying from one end of the spectrum to the other, and then end abruptly. Even catching a savage beast isn't as thrilling as this.

"Weren't you acting arrogantly just now?"

However.... Before they could recover from the shock, Zhang Xuan has already walked up to the Viridescent Eagle and sent a kick at it.

Peng!

Before the Viridescent Eagle could react, it was sent flying outward. It crashed heavily into a pillar in the room and twitched non-stop.

The strength of his kick definitely exceeded 600 ding. Regardless of how powerful the defenses of the eagle was, it should be impossible to withstand.

"To dare to make a move against me, you must be tired of living!"

It seemed that a single kick wasn't enough to vent Zhang Xuan's frustration. He walked forward and kicked yet again.

Peng!

The Viridescent Eagle was sent into the air once more. Its haughtiness had disappeared without a trace, and at this moment, it appeared exceptionally shabby. If not for the strong defense it possessed as a savage beast, it would have already died from the two kicks.

"Stop...."

Mo Yu's face turned red in anger.

That was her savage beast! If Zhang Xuan were to continue beating it up like that, even if it doesn't die, it would become crippled.

She couldn't allow the savage beast which she has tamed with great difficulty to die

here just like that.

"Mo Yu xiaojie, don't panic. This should be the Beast Pummeling Taming Method!"

Yun Tao hurriedly walked over to inform her.

"Beast Pummeling Taming Method?"

"This is the name that I came up with. Every time Elder tames a beast, he would first beat it up. It seems that he's doing the same this time as well!" Admiration gleamed in Yun Tao's eyes.

As expected of Elder Zhang Xuan, his beast taming method is indeed extraordinary!

This is one of the hardest Tongxuan realm savage beasts to tame! Other people would have to bring tons of delicious food and treasures to coax it. Yet, he started pummeling it immediately without any mercy....

He couldn't help but admire his courage!

"Can he really tame the savage beast like that? I think he'll only incur the wrath and resentment of the Viridescent Eagle!"

Mo Yu's eyes narrowed.

She had read nearly all of the books in the library, but she had never heard of any Beast Pummeling Taming Method!

Such an action would only cause resentment in the savage beast. If so, how can one successfully tame it?

"The Viridescent Eagle, as one of the stronger aerial savage beast, has a wild and arrogant nature. It has great pride, and if one tries to befriend it as an equal, it might still choose to give in. However, if one hopes to tame it by pummeling it, that's no different from daydreaming...."

Flinging her sleeves, Mo Yu harrumphed. However, before she could finish her words, her body froze abruptly. Her eyes widened as she muttered, "Ah? This.... This.... What is going on?"

All of a sudden, the hostile Viridescent Eagle struggled to its feet and rubbed its head against Zhang Xuan's body, fawning on him as though a loyal dog.

This is.... Voluntary Submission!

Chapter 252

Failed?

This is an incomparably prideful Viridescent Eagle. In order to tame it, Mo Yu had specially climbed to the peak of the mountain, personally slaughtered a Pixue realm snake for its dinner, gathered snow water for its bath....

Even so, this fellow had only agreed to follow her to the examination. In a sense, she hasn't successfully tamed it yet.

Yet, after the beating, it lowered its head immediately....

What that maddened Mo Yu the most was the fawning expression it had on its face, as though it was trying to please the other party.... What the heck is that?

Mo Yu felt a stifling sensation at her chest. All of the sudden, she felt uncomfortable.

That was her savage beast, and she wasn't too far away from establishing a contract with it. Yet, at this moment, it was lying on another person's lap, trying to please the person. She felt so depressed that she was not far from sustaining internal injuries from it.

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan, who were extremely confident a moment ago, looked as though they had been slapped in their face. Their faces distorted in disbelief, and they looked as though they were on the verge of tears.

Voluntary Submission after a beating?

Are our eyes playing tricks on us?

"You two...."

They were still brooding over the matter when Mo Yu xiaojie turned to them with an icy-cold expression. Her teeth were so tightly gritted together that the sound of them grinding against one another could be heard. "Didn't you two say that.... he will fail?"

"I...."

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan trembled in fear.

They were the ones who persuaded Mo xiaojie to hand over the Viridescent Eagle for the other party to tame. They thought that they would be able to see the other party make an embarrassment out of himself. Not in their wildest dreams did they expect this situation to occur.

"Mo xiaojie, don't panic, I think that the Viridescent Eagle is just flustered after being beaten up, so it is feigning submission. It'll probably retaliate in short moment...."

With twitching lips, Zhu Jinhuang hurriedly explained.

"Indeed, indeed! Savage beasts of such level possess intelligence. It must have thought that it wasn't a match for the fellow, so it decided to pretend to submit to Zhang Xuan and look for another opportunity to exact vengeance...."

Zhou Xuan said.

However, before he could finish his words, an uproar could be heard. He turned over hurriedly and saw Zhang Xuan place a drop of blood into the other party's throat.

The contract had been established.

Qiu!

After establishing the contract, the Viridescent Eagle lay before Zhang Xuan in satisfaction. It rubbed its head against Zhang Xuan's clothes unceasingly, as though a lazy cat who had just been fed and was filled with fondness for its master.

"Is this what you call feigning submission to exact vengeance?"

Furious, Mo Yu's face turned beet-red in anger. She kicked the duo, sending them flipping in the air.

Have you seen any beast which establishes a contract while feigning submission?

Have you ever seen any vengeful savage beast act in such a manner?

Mo Yu's breathing hastened, and she felt as though she was about to burst from all the rage.

Why did she believe the words of these two fellows and lend the Viridescent Eagle to the other party to tame?

It was too late for regrets, given that the two of them had already established a contract.

Even so, amidst her anger, she was shocked as well.

How in the world did he do it?

She had watched the entire taming process carefully. All he did was to incur the other party's wrath before beating it up. Then, he whispered some words to it before patting a few spots on its body.... and the attitude of the Viridescent Eagle changed immediately. Its infuriated expression suddenly turned into surprise and excitement. After which.... It immediately submitted to Zhang Xuan!

Can it be that....

That's right!

It must be something that he said!

Otherwise, how can its attitude have changed so quickly?

Just that.... what in the world could he have said to drastically change the attitude of the furious Viridescent Eagle who desired to kill him so suddenly?

"How is it? My words are true, right? This is Elder Zhang Xuan's skill, Beast Pummeling Taming Method. Any savage beast, after being beaten by him, would willingly submit!" Yun Tao laughed heartily.

Didn't you doubt him just now? Take a good look at this then!

"The Viridescent Eagle really submitted after a beating...."

"This is Mo Yu xiaojie's savage beast! How is this possible?"

"I don't understand it as well. It's not like we've never tried taming savage beasts by beating them up before. But, all of the attempts had ended in failure, so how in the world did he succeed?"

....

Everyone was dumbfounded.

This was especially so for the three 2-star beast tamers. They felt a dizzy sensation in their head.

It's not like no beast tamer had attempted to tame a savage beast by beating it up. However.... Not only did such actions fail to tame the savage beast, it even incurred their wrath. Most of the savage beasts tamed in such a method would refuse food and die of starvation.

There were cases of failures all around. Putting others aside, they had tried this method personally as well.

This was the reason why they found it hard to believe Yun Tao's words. Yet.... To think that he wasn't lying!

Just by beating the Viridescent Eagle up, it immediately submitted to him....

Is this the same prideful and wild Viridescent Eagle?

Why does it seem like an obedient dog now, fawning on Zhang Xuan so shamelessly?

They were still in a state of disbelief when Zhang Xuan walked forward and inquired, "Hall Master Feng and the two beast tamers, have I passed the examination?"

"This...."

Recovering from his shock, Hall Master Feng coughed immediately, "Cough cough, wait a moment. We have to check the Loyalty Level before deciding on your pass or failure!"

Even though it looked like the Viridescent Eagle had been tamed, there was still a need for official verification. Firstly, it was to ensure that the test was impartial and precise. Secondly, they were curious to see if this Viridescent Eagle has sincerely submitted to him.

If it didn't submit to him from the bottom of its heart, flying on it may prove to be dangerous.

"Let's do the test then!"

Zhang Xuan said casually.

He was confident in the Viridescent Eagle's loyalty toward him.

Naturally, the Viridescent Eagle didn't submit to him just because he beat it up.

When it attacked him, a book on it was compiled in Zhang Xuan's head. Thereafter, he swiftly looked through the book and understood the eagle's flaws.

While it seemed that he was merely beating it up, he had infused his pure zhenqi into the body of the other party to cleanse its bloodline. Employing both the carrot and the stick simultaneously, it would be difficult for it to not submit to him.

His Heaven's Path zhenqi is an unparalleled tool in cleansing a savage beast's bloodline and raising its cultivation. No savage beast is able to resist its allure.

Given that there were only two choices, be killed by Zhang Xuan, or follow him and raise its strength, regardless of how foolish a savage beast could be, it was obvious what they would choose.

Compared to cleansing its bloodline and raising its strength, all of the other delicacies, tonics, and such were nothing.

Weng!

Beast Tamer Lu took the Heart Inquisition Crystal and started conducting the test on the Viridescent Eagle.

Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang stood up and walked over to Princess Mo Yu.

"Mo Yu xiaojie, don't worry. So what if he has established a contract? Given that the Viridescent Eagle is tamed through brute force, its Loyalty Level must be low. Even at maximum, it will only be 31!"

"If it's just 31, given that xiaojie's Loyalty Level is 30, there's a high possibility you

might be able to tame it back!"

The two of them consoled.

Even though Advanced Taming is technically a high level than Inceptive Taming, in practice, a Loyalty Level of 31 doesn't actually differ much from a level of 30. As long as Mo Yu pleased it by feeding it with delicious food, the Viridescent Eagle might still come back to her.

The saying that a savage beast recognized only a single master in their entire life is actually just a general statement.

Legend has it that the truly formidable beast tamers are able to tame another person's tamed beast with just a few words, even if it has already established a contract with another tamer.

Putting everything else aside, the very fact that Zhang Xuan managed to tame Mo Yu's Viridescent Eagle proved that it wasn't entirely impossible.

Since it has changed sides once, it is possible for it to do so once again.

"A maximum of 31?"

Mo Yu's anger still wasn't placated.

"Indeed, how loyal can a savage beast who was tamed through brute force be? Does this even need to be said...."

Zhu Jinhuang sneered coldly. Yet, before he could finish his words, he suddenly felt a tightening sensation on his arm.

"What's wrong?"

Turning around to look, it was Zhou Xuan who had grabbed him.

"Look...."

Zhou Xuan's lips were quivering.

Following the direction where he was pointing in, Zhu Jinhuang took a glance and all

of the words he was about to spout vanished. In an instant, he felt tears threatening to spill from his eyes.

Numbers had appeared on the Heart Inquisition Crystal.

Loyalty Level of the Viridescent Eagle toward Zhang Xuan, 45!

Complete Submission, the highest realm possible....

Complete silence.

Everyone's jaws fell to the ground.

Actually, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuan weren't the only ones who thought so. Everyone also felt that the Loyalty Level of the Viridescent Eagle would be low, given that it was beaten into submission. Yet.... never had they imagined that it would reach 45!

This was Complete Submission, the highest level of loyalty a savage beast could have! Countless beast tamers had lived together with their savage beasts for numerous years, but remained unable to induce such loyalty in their savage beast.... Yet, this level was reached just by giving a round of beating....

Everyone felt their perspective of the world overturn.

"This should be considered as a pass, right?"

Seeing the number on the Heart Inquisition Crystal, Zhang Xuan wasn't surprised at all. He turned to look at Hall Master Feng with a smile.

"In the first round of the theoretical examination, you passed the discourse without making any mistakes. In the second round, you managed to tame a Viridescent Eagle with a Loyalty Level of 45...." Hall Master Feng nodded his head. "I declare that Zhang Xuan has passed the beast tamer examination and that he is officially a 1-star beast tamer!"

Seeing that he had passed the examination, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

With this identity, he would be exempted from paying for future rides on aerial savage beasts borrowed from the Beast Hall....

"Wait a moment...."

The moment Hall Master Feng finished announcing the result, a bellow sounded.

"What's wrong, Beast Tamer Mo?" Hall Master Feng turned to look at her.

The one who spoke was Mo Yu.

She had passed the examination, thus he addressed her as a beast tamer to display his respect.

"I disagree with the results. I believe that he hasn't fulfilled the criteria of the examination and thus, he isn't qualified to become an official beast tamer!"

Mo Yu stepped forward and spoke.

"Oh?" Hall Master Feng frowned.

"For the beast tamer examination, one has to tame a savage beast stronger than him. Even though Zhang Xuan didn't display his cultivation, given how he was able to defeat the Viridescent Eagle easily, his cultivation realm is most likely higher than it. At the minimum, he is probably at Tongxuan realm pinnacle!"

Mo Yu sneered coldly, "Meaning to say.... even though he tamed the Viridescent Eagle, he had merely tamed a savage beast with a cultivation realm lower than him. With this, he doesn't meet the required conditions, and thus, he shouldn't pass!"

"This...."

Upon hearing her words, Hall Master Feng hesitated.

The situation was exactly as what the other party said.

The conditions for the savage beast tamed for the examination is that its cultivation realm has to be higher than the examinee. Zhou Xuan, Zhu Jinhuan, and Yun Tao had fulfilled this condition.

In the previous battle, Zhang Xuan relied solely on his physical body strength, and as such, the others weren't able to see through his cultivation realm. Even so, given how he was able to defeat the Viridescent Eagle so easily, there was no doubt that his

cultivation realm was above that of the Viridescent Eagle.... Going by the usual practice, Zhang Xuan wasn't yet qualified to become a beast tamer.

"You mean to say.... I am unqualified to become a beast tamer because the savage beast I tamed has a cultivation realm lower than mine?" Zhang Xuan glanced at her.

"Yes!" Mo Yu replied coldly.

"Then, what if.... this Viridescent Eagle isn't at Tongxuan realm, but at Half-Zongshi, does this mean that I've passed the examination?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Of course!" Mo Yu nodded.

Even though she didn't know how strong the other party was, she didn't think that he had reached Half-Zongshi.

"Good...."

Nodding his head, Zhang Xuan turned to the Viridescent Eagle and said, "Alright, it's your turn!"

Qiu!

Following a piercing call, a powerful force suddenly burst forth from the massive body of the Viridescent Eagle.

Chapter 253

You Are a Master Teacher?

Boom!

At this moment, the Viridescent Eagle seemed like a bomb that is about to explode at any moment. The sound reminiscent of flowing water sounded from its body, and its numerous acupoints were flickering, as though a powerful energy was gushing into them.

Geji! Geji!

The sound within its body crescendoed, and its three-meter-tall body grew suddenly. At the same time, its feathers also extended outward.

"This... is this Bloodline Evolution? Is it breaking through its cultivation realm?"

Hall Master Feng narrowed his eyes.

Coming to the same conclusion as well, Beast Tamer Lu and Beast Tamer Wang's faces grew red with agitation, and they clenched their fists tightly.

"Bloodline Evolution? What's that?"

Someone asked doubtfully.

Not everyone in the room was a beast tamer, such as the guards of Yun Tao, Zhu Jinhuang, and Zhou Xuan. They didn't have a complete knowledge of beast taming.

"The strength of a savage beast is affected by several factors, and of which, there are three which is the most commonly seen. Firstly, age. A savage beast would grow along with age, reaching the peak of its strength only when it reaches adulthood. This is also the most common limiting factor of a savage beast's strength. Secondly, bloodline. The more powerful a savage beast's bloodline is, the more potential it has. Even when it reaches adulthood, if its bloodline is sufficiently potent, it can continue to raise its cultivation. Thirdly, cultivation techniques. Some of the more intelligent savage beasts

are capable of cultivating alongside their beast tamers and improve along with them."

One of the more knowledgeable people in the room replied him with a hushed voice. "Usually, it is impossible for a savage beast to improve its bloodline. However, sometimes upon eating unique herbs or undergoing an exceptional experience, it is possible for a savage beast's bloodline to break through its limits and reach higher levels!"

"As its bloodline evolves, its cultivation also breaks through its limit and reach higher realms. This kind of evolution is similar to mutation and is extremely rare. To think that the Viridescent Eagle would be so lucky as to chance on such an opportunity. It's truly lucky...."

"Along with the Bloodline Evolution, its cultivation soars rapidly. Will this Viridescent Eagle really reach Half-Zongshi?"

"If it succeeds to reach Half-Zongshi, it would mean that Zhang Xuan has successfully tamed a Half-Zongshi savage beast. If so, he would meet the conditions for the test, thus passing the beast tamer examination!"

Upon hearing the explanation, everyone came to a realization.

"This.... This is impossible...."

Upon witnessing such a situation right after challenging Zhang Xuan's qualification, Mo Yu's face turned red. She was on the verge of going insane.

This Viridescent Eagle was her tamed beast, and she had investigated its background clearly. It had become an adult and it hadn't eaten any precious herbs that could possibly trigger a Bloodline Evolution. As such, it should have been impossible for such a situation to occur.

Yet, right after being beaten up by Zhang Xuan, not only was its cultivation raised, its bloodline even evolved....

You must be joking with me!

If I knew that it would undergo Bloodline Evolution, I would have never given you a chance to tame it!

A Half-Zongshi realm savage beast.... Once tamed, one can cultivate along with it. It would be much easier for her to reach Half-Zongshi with its assistance....

Yet, she gave away this opportunity just like that!

She felt so stifled that she was about to go insane.

"Mo Yu xiaojie, can it be that fellow's beating which triggered the Viridescent Eagle's bloodline to evolve, resulting in the rise in its cultivation?" Zhu Jinhuang asked.

"That's impossible!" Before Mo Yu could reply, Zhou Xuan shook his head. "Usually, a Bloodline Evolution can only be triggered by consuming precious herbs or blood essences left behind by powerful savage beasts and purifying its bloodline. How can it achieve a breakthrough just by undergoing a beating?"

Bloodline Evolution requires a huge amount of luck to occur. Regardless of whether a savage beast consumed a precious herb or the blood essence of a powerful savage beast, it has to be completely compatible with the savage beast for it to work. The success rate is below 1 in 10000.

The concept of its bloodline evolving through a beating.... is a joke!

"Zhou Xuan is right. No matter how capable that fellow is, it is impossible for him to purify the Viridescent Eagle's bloodline and trigger a Bloodline Evolution just by beating it. The only explanation is that.... the Viridescent Eagle had consumed something special before coming here, and that it began to take effect here...."

Agreeing with Zhou Xuan's words, Mo Yu nodded her head. "If I'm not wrong, it might be the Bewildering Soul Flower that I fed it before coming here! I heard that it is a tonic to the Viridescent Eagle, and I had specially spent a huge sum of money to purchase it for the purpose of taming the eagle...."

Recalling the price of the Bewildering Soul Flower, she felt her heart ache. Just as she was gritting her teeth in resentment, she saw Yun Tao walk over, muttering something beneath his breath.

"As expected of Elder Zhang Xuan. Any savage beast which he beats up experiences a Bloodline Evolution. It was the same for the Gold Alloyed Panther and the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow as well.... I thought that it was just a coincidence, but to think that this Viridescent Eagle has achieved a breakthrough as well!"

"What did you say?"

Upon hearing his words, Mo Yu swallowed back the words at the tip of her tongue. With widened eyes, she stared at Yun Tao.

"Oh, nothing much. I am just impressed by Elder Zhang Xuan. You have all seen his Gold Alloyed Panther as well. It should have been a Pixue realm savage beast, but it has already reached Tongxuan realm! The Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow was also merely a Pixue realm primary stage savage beast, but at this moment, it has reached intermediate stage.... All because of Elder Zhang's beating."

Yun Tao replied seriously.

"After being beaten up.... Not only is he able to get the savage beast to submit, he can trigger a Bloodline Evolution as well?"

Mo Yu, Zhu Jinhuan, Zhou Xuan, and the others felt themselves entering a frenzy.

Why.... do Yun Tao's words seem so incredulous?

This was especially so for Mo Yu. It hadn't been long since she declared that it was due to her Bewildering Soul Flower that the Viridescent Eagle was able to achieve a breakthrough. Upon hearing Yun Tao's words, she felt a stinging sensation on her face.

Who is she?

An incredible genius. Even considering the entire Beast Hall and Tianwu Kingdom, she belonged to the very top.

Being awarded a grade-1 in the beast tamer examination, she outshone everyone. But while she was still gleeful over this feat, this fellow tamed her savage beast, pummeled it, and even helped it achieve a breakthrough....

Are you sure your purpose here isn't to humiliate me?

Otherwise, why would you disprove every single word that I say....

Boom!

Amidst everyone's shock and frenzy, the Viridescent Eagle's rising aura finally came

to a standstill.

At this moment, its physique was significantly larger than how it was previously, reaching a height of four meters. At the same time, it emanated a much more powerful aura than before. It felt as if with a slight scratch of its claws, cracks would appear on the bluestone ground.

Half-Zongshi!

This Viridescent Eagle has actually reached Half-Zongshi!

"So.... have I passed the examination?"

Zhang Xuan smiled.

"You pass!"

The three beast tamers nodded.

If this can't be considered a pass, what can?

Besides, they were also overflowing with doubts.

Mo Yu might not be able clearly to tell what Zhang Xuan did, but as 2-star beast tamers, they could tell that the Bloodline Evolution of the Viridescent Eagle was Zhang Xuan's credit.

To trigger a Bloodline Evolution within a savage beast....

If he can do this for any savage beast, it will definitely cause an uproar in the Beast Hall.

At this point, Hall Master Feng couldn't hold himself back anymore. Clasp ing his fists, he said, "Beast Tamer Zhang, I have something I would like to ask...."

"I know what you want to ask. Are you curious why this Viridescent Eagle would suddenly undergo a Bloodline Evolution?"

Zhang Xuan looked at him.

"Yes!" Hall Master Feng replied.

Hearing the exchange between the two, the others immediately focused their attention here.

After beating up the Viridescent Eagle, not only did it submit, it even underwent a Bloodline Evolution. If they hadn't witnessed this sight for themselves, they would never have believed it to be possible.

Everyone was dying to know what happened.

"It's simple. I used the blood essence of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow as a bait to induce its submission. Then.... I fed the blood essence to it, thus triggering the Blood Evolution." Zhang Xuan said.

Inducing a breakthrough in a savage beast was no easy feat. If others were to know that Zhang Xuan's zhenqi could trigger a Bloodline Evolution, it would bring him a whole lot of trouble.

Thus, he attributed the matter to the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow.

In any case, there were precedents of savage beast consuming the blood essence of powerful savage beasts and achieving breakthroughs.... As an ancient beast, the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow possessed a pure bloodline. Even though the Viridescent Eagle had a massive physique, it was nevertheless considered as an avian. There was a possibility that the bloodline of the ancient sparrow might be compatible with the eagle....

However, if someone else wanted to try the same thing, Zhang Xuan wouldn't take the blame if their tamed beast dies.

More importantly, the Ancient Cloud Lightning Sparrow was Yun Tao's savage beast. Even if anything happened, Zhang Xuan wouldn't be held responsible.

Since that fellow obtained a free ancient beast from him, he should at least contribute by becoming his whipping boy!

"So that's the case!"

Upon hearing his explanation, Hall Master Feng and the others exchanged gazes and

nodded their heads.

This seemed to be the only plausible explanation.

Otherwise.... to achieve a breakthrough by receiving a beating.... it sounded nonsensical no matter how they looked at it.

"It's the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow...."

Upon hearing the explanation, Mo Yu came to a realization. At the same time, she felt intense regret.

If she knew that the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow could help trigger a Bloodline Evolution in the Viridescent Eagle, she would have tried to get close to Zhang Xuan and Yun Tao. It could have been the final trigger for her to achieve Advanced Taming.

But now, she has nothing left....

Her savage beast was completely tamed by the other party, and the Loyalty Level was at an astonishing 45. Even though he said 'borrow', it was unlikely that he would return it....

"To be able to recognize the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow and possess so many means, can it be...."

Upon recalling something, Mo Yu hesitated for a moment before walking over to Zhang Xuan.

"Damn it!"

Seeing numerous emotions flicker across Mo Yu's face and her walking toward Zhang Xuan, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang clenched their fists tightly.

They had been completely outdone by this fellow this time. Needless to say, Mo Yu must have fallen for him.

"I heard that this fellow came from Tianxuan Kingdom and doesn't have any strong backing. If things come down to this...."

Zhu Jinhuang gestured his intentions to murder Zhang Xuan.

Given that Yun Tao was the prince of a country, they didn't dare to push things too far. However, Zhang Xuan was different. As an insignificant figure without any backing, his life and death meant nothing.

They might not be a match for the other party, but as princes of their kingdoms, it wasn't difficult for them to gather a few powerful subordinates to deal with him.

"Alright!"

Zhou Xuan spat through gritted teeth.

Today, they were completely humiliated by that young lad. It would be hard to quench their anger if they didn't get back at him.

To dare to offend two princes without having any backing, he is truly courting death!

The duo was discussing how they could murder this Zhang Xuan when Mo Yu was already right before Zhang Xuan. With glowing eyes, she spoke of her doubt.

"The essence blood of the Ancient Lightning Cloud Sparrow is probably just one of the contributing factors. There should be a more important reason behind its breakthrough.... If I'm not wrong, you are a master teacher, right?"

"Master teacher?"

Upon hearing Mo Yu's words, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang, who were just discussing how they could kill Zhang Xuan, shivered uncontrollably. At that moment, they could no longer hold themselves back and cried.

Those two fools had actually intended to kill a master teacher.... They sure are brazen!

The heck, didn't they say that he doesn't have any backing?

But his backing seems to be even greater than the heavens....

Chapter 254

Critically Ill Savage Beast

Master teachers are protected by the Teacher Guild and the Master Teacher Pavilion. Putting aside whether they would be able to get off with assassinating a master teacher, even if they were to just offend one, a sanction may be imposed on them.

Given their power and prestige of the, almost all powers and experts have no choice but to show respect to the Teacher Guild and the Master Teacher Pavilion, needless to say, a mere Tier 2 Kingdom. Even if the sanction was applied on a Tier 1 Kingdom like Tianwu Kingdom, it would merely be a matter of time before the country fell apart.

That was to say, if they were to attempt to assassinate a master teacher and be discovered, not only would they be killed, even their kingdom would be implicated!

This is how fearsome master teachers are!

The number one occupation in the world mustn't be insulted or desecrated!

Regardless of emperors or sect leaders; regardless of how powerful or influential one can be, with a single word from the Master Teacher Pavilion, his existence would be erased.

It was said that an emperor of a Conferred Kingdom once teased a beautiful female master teacher, incurring her wrath. Without even using the power of the Master Teacher Pavilion, simply just by conducting a lecture on the same spot for seven days straight, she attracted countless experts, and with a single command, captured the emperor alive and beat him to death.

There was a very powerful old elder in the kingdom, and he could have stopped them. Yet, he dared not to do so.

When an emperor dies, another one can be appointed. But if a kingdom were to be destroyed, nothing would be left.

It was hard to tell how many students a master teacher could have, With just a single

pointer, one can already be regarded as half a teacher. Thus, master teachers were thought to be beehives. If a person were to agitate them, he would be crippled even if he were to survive the ordeal.

Assassinating a master teacher.... Honestly speaking, it was no different from courting death.

Zhu Jinhuang and the others trembled in fear. He immediately suppressed the thoughts in his head.

"Master teacher?" Not expecting Mo Yu to come to this conclusion, Zhang Xuan shook his head. "I'm not one yet!"

Even though he was acknowledged by three master teachers, he could only be considered as one of the more incredible master teacher apprentices. Since he hasn't passed the master teacher examination yet, he couldn't be considered as a master teacher.

"You aren't?" Mo Yu was stunned.

She thought that the reason why the other party possessed such formidable means was that he was a master teacher. To think that he wasn't one....

"He isn't a master teacher? Great...."

"As long as he isn't a master teacher, he must die by hook or by crook!"

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan confess that he wasn't a master teacher, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang, who were panicking a moment ago, heaved a sigh of relief. Their killing intent started to emerge once more.

But in the next moment, Shen Bi Ru's voice rang, "Although Zhang laoshi isn't a master teacher, he is a senior to Beiwu Kingdom's Liu shi, Zhuang shi, and Hanwu Kingdom's Zheng shi!"

"The senior of three master teachers?"

The duo stared at one another. This time, they really burst into tears.

As princes from Tier 2 Kingdoms, they have heard of the name of the three master

teachers. They were considered as one of the top-notch figures in the Tier 2 Kingdoms, and even the lowest of men knew of their existence.

And Zhang Xuan was their senior....

Even if he wasn't a master teacher, his standing was already way above that of a master teacher!

It was fortunate that they didn't make a move. Otherwise, the one who would die by hook or by crook would be them two....

....

"I know Liu Shi from Beiwu Kingdom, and I've met him once at 2-star Master Teacher Jiang Shu's lecture. If you're his senior, can it be...."

Upon hearing Shen Bi Ru's words, Mo Yu immediately realized something and her eyes narrowed.

Given that he was the senior of a master teacher, it meant that they have the same teacher. For a person to make a master teacher willingly acknowledge him as his teacher, that person had to be at least a 2-star master teacher, or even.... above that!

For Zhang Xuan to be the direct disciple of a master teacher of 2-star or higher.

His standing was even above that of hers, a princess of Tianwu Kingdom.

Furthermore, to be accepted as a direct disciple of such an incredible figure meant that Zhang Xuan possessed incredible potential. It was likely that his future achievements would far surpass hers.

After all, even though she was an apprentice of 2-star Master Teacher Jiang Shu, she wasn't his direct disciple.

Upon realizing these, she glanced at the young man before her once more. This time, admiration could be seen in her gaze.

....

"So you're a direct disciple of a master teacher, no wonder you have such an in-depth

understanding of beast taming!"

Upon coming to a realization, Hall Master Feng and the others nodded their heads.

They were just about to ask Zhang Xuan about the Beast Pummeling Taming Method and learn it from him. However, upon knowing of his true identity, they immediately dispelled this thought.

Even though beast-taming was an occupation in the Upper Nine Paths, it was far from matching up to master teacher, who stood at the zenith.

It was likely that Zhang Xuan's Beast Pummeling Taming Method came from that master teacher.... If the other party were to find out that they had tried to learn his skills from his direct disciple, they could be in trouble.

Rather than that, it was much wiser to just build a good relationship with Zhang Xuan.

"This is your 1-star beast tamer emblem!"

Upon knowing of Zhang Xuan's 'identity', the attitude of the three master teachers immediately improved. They swiftly retrieved an emblem representing one's identity as a beast tamer and presented it to Zhang Xuan.

Upon grabbing the emblem, Zhang Xuan casually placed it into his storage ring before asking.

"I would like to go to the Red Lotus Ridge and I need an aerial savage beast. What do you think I should do?"

Even though he had become a beast tamer and read a large collection of book on beast taming, he had never ridden on an aerial savage beast before, and there might be a difference between theories in the book and practical situations. As such, he hoped to receive some professional input.

"Red Lotus Ridge?"

Hall Master Feng stroked his beard as he calculated, "Tianwu Kingdom is around tens of thousand of kilometers from here. If you ride on the Viridescent Eagle which you've just tamed, it should take around half a month!"

"Half a month?"

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He thought that since the Viridescent Eagle had reached Half-Zongshi, the journey should only take a couple of days. The thought that he would still require half a month never crossed his mind.

"That's right. This Viridescent Eagle has just achieved a breakthrough, and its cultivation hasn't yet stabilized. At most, it can travel 4000 to 5000 kilometers per day. Furthermore, it has to take frequent rest, so it is unable to fly overnight. Therefore, half a month is the fastest that it can go!" Hall Master Feng said.

Zhang Xuan nodded.

Even though he didn't know how fast the Viridescent Eagle could fly, given how it had just reached Half-Zongshi, it was unlikely that it was able to unleash the full strength of the realm. In addition, it has to stabilize its cultivation and adapt to its new strength. As such, the estimate of half a month made sense.

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan recalled what Han Qiong said before and asked.

"I've heard that the Beast Hall have [Lightning Mounts] which travel at swift speeds and are able to easily cover distances of tens of thousand of kilometers within a few days. May I ask if that's true?"

"The Beast Hall does have Lightning Mounts, which are Zongshi realm savage beasts. They are given the nickname of 'lightning' due to the swift speed at which it can ferry humans. However...." Hall Master Feng hesitated for a moment before speaking. "There are only two such Beast Mounts in the Beast Hall. One of which is on the way to Qianxue Kingdom, while the other one...."

At this point, he shook his head. The other two beast tamers beside him also seemed to be dispirited upon talking about this matter.

"What's wrong?" Zhang Xuan became puzzled after seeing their strange expressions.

"The other Lightning Mount has become critically ill. Today, it was unable to even stand up, needless to say, fly. Just earlier today, I, Beast Tamer Lu, and Beast Tamer

Wang were examining it to identify possible treatments. That is also the reason why we weren't able to make it for the examination and had Beast Tamer Hong stand in for us!"

Hall Master Feng said.

"Critically ill?" At this point, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled Beast Tamer Hong saying that Hall Master Feng and the others were busy with something and as such, they were unable to make it for the examination.

A while ago, he was wondering what could be more important than the beast tamer examination. Turns out, this was the matter they were attending to.

The Zongshi realm savage beast could be considered as the trump card of this Beast Hall. Given that it was too ill to even stand up, it was no wonder why they were feeling flustered.

"What illness is it?" Zhang Xuan asked.

The condition of the savage beast didn't matter to him at all.... What Zhang Xuan was concerned with was how much time he could save if he flew on that Lightning Mount.

Upon hearing his question, Hall Master Feng shook his head, "It's precisely because we can't tell what's wrong that we're helpless on this matter!"

"The three of us had used all kinds of beast tamer diagnosing methods, but we remain unable to tell what's wrong!" Beast Tamer Lu smiled bitterly.

Since they were unable to even tell what illness it was, they were, naturally, unable to treat it.

"Is there any solution?" Mo Yu could not help but ask.

As a beast tamer, she was concerned over the health of the savage beast after hearing about its plight.

"We've already sent someone to Beiwu Kingdom to invite Grandmaster Qing Yang over. Perhaps he would be able to diagnose the root of the illness!" Beast Tamer Wang said.

"Grandmaster Qing Yang? Is Beast Tamer Wang talking about the only 2-star physician

in Beiwu Kingdom?" Shen Bi Ru pondered for a moment before asking.

"That's right! Even though we, beast tamers, do possess methods to diagnose and treat the illnesses of savage beasts, we are still far from matching up to real physicians. I've already sent someone to invite him, so he should be arriving soon!" Beast Tamer Wang smiled.

Even though beast tamers have their own methods to treat savage beast illnesses, their treatment methods mainly catered to common symptoms. They were helpless toward the more complicated illnesses, such as the one the Lightning Mount was afflicted with at the moment. The only option for them was to employ the help of a grandmaster physician.

Beiwu Kingdom wasn't too far from the Beast Hall, and a roundabout trip on an aerial savage beast wouldn't take more than two hours.

Since they were waiting for the arrival of Grandmaster Qing Yang, they decided to spectate the beast tamer examination and happened to witness the conflict between Zhang Xuan and Beast Tamer Hong.

Beast Tamer Wang seemed to be extremely confident in that physician named Qing Yang, and turning toward Zhang Xuan, he smiled, "As soon as its illness is cured, we can lend it to you for a trip to the Red Lotus Ridge! However.... The price for riding on a Zongshi realm Beast Mount is quite steep. You will have to prepare yourself for it!"

"How much does it cost?"

Zhang Xuan asked.

"According to the price of the Beast Hall, a journey to the faraway Tianwu Kingdom on a Zongshi realm savage beast would require at least twenty [Beast Bloodstone]. As Beast Tamer Zhang is one of our members, we can give you a 20% discount, thus you will only require 16 Beast Bloodstone. In terms of common currency used in the kingdoms, it is around eight million gold coins!"

"Eight million gold coins?"

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in shock.

In order to earn that sum, he had to disguise himself and work himself down to the

bones. Yet, it cost so much money just to make a single trip.... That was no different from daylight robbery!

"There's no way around it. A Zongshi realm savage beast requires a 2-star beast tamer to drive it. Furthermore, you are riding it as an individual. This is already the lowest price we can give you!"

Beast Tamer Wang smiled bitterly.

Even though the Zongshi realm Lightning Mount had been tamed, it was impossible for one to drive it without sufficient expertise. Thus, a 2-star beast tamer had to tag along for the ride.

Beast tamers who have reached 2-stars were at least Zongshi realm.

That is to say, for a single trip, a Zongshi realm expert and Zongshi realm savage beast have to be mobilized. Thus, how can the price possibly be low?

One must know that a Zongshi realm expert can be considered as a stabilizing pillar in a Tier 2 Kingdom!

Eight million gold coins weren't demanding too much given that a person of such immense standing would have to be mobilized. Even so, Zhang Xuan still found the price hard to accept.

"Didn't you say that.... beast tamers can ride on Beast Mounts for free?" Suppressing his dismal, Zhang Xuan asked.

The reason why he took the beast tamer examination was that Yun Tao said that he could ride for free. Yet, it turned out that he has to pay eight million.... He felt depressed just by thinking about it.

"A 1-star beast tamer can only ride on aerial savage beasts below Zongshi realm for free. If he wishes to ride on Zongshi realm savage beasts for free, he has to be a 2-star beast tamer!" Seeing that Zhang Xuan was ignorant of the matter, Hall Master Feng explained.

"A 2-star beast tamer can ride on the Lightning Mount for free?"

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan asked, "If that's the case.... What's the

requirement for the 2-star beast tamer examination? I'll try challenging the examination!"

Chapter 255

Grandmaster Qing Yang

Try challenging the examination?

The corner of the mouths of Hall Master Feng and the others twitched.

Of the countless examinees who had ever taken an examination in the Beast Hall, this was the most eccentric reason they have ever heard.

Most people took the beast tamer examination because their capability and strength had met the basic requirements, and they hoped to receive recognition. Yet, this fellow was doing it just so that his ride would be free....

You are a senior to master teachers! With such incredible capability, as long as you are willing to put in some effort, you should be able to earn a few million gold coins easily. To act like that just for some money.... Where is your pride? Where is your dignity? What about your standing?

More importantly, the examination he wanted to take was the 2-star beast tamer examination. In the thousand years since the establishment of the Xuanluo Mountain Range Beast Hall, there hadn't been more than ten 2-star beast tamer.

Try challenging the examination.... You make it sound as though it is as easy as eating and drinking, and there's nothing to be scared or nervous about.

Do you know the difficulty of the examination?

Do you know that an expert like Beast Tamer Hong has already failed it seven times?

To speak of the matter so casually, aren't you underestimating the profession a little too much?

Mo Yu's chest expanded and contracted violently. She was close to bursting into a rage.

Despite being one of the top geniuses in Tianwu Kingdom, she spent a year before

achieving the status of a 1-star beast tamer. She thought that she would win the admiration of everyone here, but.... she met this fellow.

It took her countless resources, coaxing, and pleading to achieve Inceptive Taming with the Viridescent Eagle. Yet, just by beating it up, the Viridescent Eagle submitted completely to the other party.... He had just passed the 1-star beast tamer examination, yet he wasn't satisfied and wanted to take on the 2-star beast tamer examination immediately....

It was one thing if Zhang Xuan had built up a solid foundation and wanted to take on both examination at once to amaze others. However.... He obviously didn't have such intentions beforehand. It was only after hearing that he would get to ride on the Lightning Mount for free did he have such thoughts.

Other people tire themselves to death in order to become a 2-star beast tamer, yet you regard it as though a walk in the park. You don't have to demoralize others like that, do you....

"The 2-star beast tamer examination requires...."

Suppressing the stifling sensation in his chest, Hall Master Feng was just about to start explaining when an elder abruptly walked in with an agitated expression.

"Hall master, hall master! Grandmaster Qing Yang is here!"

"He's here?"

The eyes of the three beast tamers lit up immediately. They stood up in a hurry and walked out without saying a word.

After taking a few steps, Hall Master Feng abruptly stopped. He turned around and said, "Since you are all official beast tamers already, you are qualified to examine the proceedings as well. This is a good opportunity for you to spectate how a grandmaster physician treats a Zongshi realm savage beast and build on your knowledge!"

"Yes!"

Mo Yu, Zhu Jinhuan, and the others nodded their heads and followed along.

"Elder, let's take a look as well. It's a rare opportunity to witness the treatment of a

savage beast, and we might be able to learn a thing or two from it!"

Seeing the others walk into the distance, Yun Tao walked over to Zhang Xuan.

"Alright!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

He had been wanting to ride on the Lightning Mount all along. Once that fellow was treated, he would be able to save considerable time and effort for his journey to the Red Lotus Ridge.

Following behind the crowd, he soon arrived at a giant courtyard.

It was large and vast, and the infrastructures were several times larger than those of an ordinary residence. It felt as if one had stepped into a country of giants.

The stone stools in the courtyard were all seven to eight meters wide. If one didn't examine it carefully, he might even think that it was a stage. The stone pavement by the courtyard was also extremely wide, around several dozens of meters large. There was a pond at the center of the courtyard, and the entire place felt like a majestic palace.

"This is the residence specially built for the[Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast]. There are seven apprentice beast tamers who live together with it to manage its day-to-day necessities...."

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan's bewildered expression, Yun Tao explained to him telepathically. "The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast is the ill Zongshi realm savage beast."

"A residence built specially for a savage beast?"

Zhang Xuan was dumbfounded.

Does it have to be so extravagant?

Regardless of the land area or the grandeur of the infrastructure, it was a match for Tianxuan Royal Palace. As such, Zhang Xuan thought that an important figure lived in the residence. Yet, to think that it was built specially for a savage beast....

Furthermore, seven apprentice beast tamers were assigned to it to take care of its day-to-day living.... The privileges it enjoyed seemed to be beyond that of an ordinary expert.

It was no wonder why a single trip to Tianwu Kingdom would cost eight million gold coins. Without such fees, it was impossible to sustain the cost of housing it.

"Grandmaster Qing Yang, we will be depending on you...."

Zhang Xuan was lamenting how the living conditions of a savage beast surpassed even that of a human when Hall Master Feng's excited voice sounded.

Glancing over, Zhang Xuan saw a tall elder dressed in green standing not too far away. With his hands behind his back, he exuded a distant aura that seemed to ward off strangers. Judging from his appearance, he seemed to be in his fifties. And without any emotions on his face, it was difficult to fathom what was going on in his mind.

He appears to be the legendary Grandmaster Physician Qing Yang!

Usually, a 1-star for any occupation would be addressed as a master while a 2-star would be addressed as grandmaster.

Grandmaster Qing Yang, as a 2-star physician, was clearly much more capable than Master Yuanyu.

"Alright! Where's the Howling Firmament Beast? Bring me to it!"

Nodding at Hall Master Feng words, Grandmaster Qing Yang dived straight into the matter at hand.

"Yes, over here!"

Hall Master Feng led the way.

Soon, they arrived at the backyard. A humongous savage beast could be seen lying on a massive stone pedestal. Its eyes were tightly shut, and it was hard to tell whether it was alive.

This savage beast bore some resemblance to the Viridescent Eagle but was significantly larger. With a physique of a dozen meter wide, it looked like a small

mountain from afar.

"Unconscious?"

With a single glance, Zhang Xuan could tell that the humongous fellow was in a comatose.

It was no wonder why Hall Master Feng and the others were in such a panic, rushing off upon hearing that Grandmaster Qing Yang had arrived. It seemed that the Howling Firmament Beast was truly in a critical condition.

"Grandmaster Qing Yang, the illness struck three days ago. Initially, it only refused food, and the condition didn't seem to be serious, so we didn't pay it much attention. But this morning, it passed out all of a sudden. We've tried several methods to wake it up, but it was futile...."

Hall Master Feng explained.

"Un!"

Nodding, Grandmaster Qing Yang stepped forward. He circled around the Howling Firmament Beast, and the more he walked, the darker his complexion became.

"Tell me about its recent diet!"

Hall Master Feng beckoned, and an apprentice beast tamer who was in charge of waiting on Howling Firmament Beast walked over and bowed respectfully.

"Ten days ago, the Howling Firmament Beast started to lose his appetite, and it seemed to have become slightly agitated. As it is the dry season of autumn and it is easy for internal heat to accumulate, we fed it the calming [Spirit Rejuvenation Water], and its symptoms were somewhat alleviated."

"However, something remained amiss with its situation. It would thrash around the residence at night, and from time to time, it would howl toward the sky. Especially, in the past few days, when there was a full moon present, it stayed up all night, running about, as though it was trying to look for an outlet for its inexhaustible energy!"

"Yet, when it wakes up, it would lose all appetite, and nothing can catch its attention. Today, it even fainted!"

"The amount of food it consumed has been decreasing constantly through the days, and other than the cooked beast meat and porridge, it doesn't eat anything else. Oh, abiding by Hall Master Feng's words, it was fed two [Heat Dissipation Pill] yesterday, but it seemed to be ineffective. On the contrary, its condition seemed to have worsened."

Very quickly, the apprentice beast tamer conveyed the basic condition of the Howling Firmament Beast.

After which, Grandmaster Qing Yang nodded and waved his hands, "You can leave now!"

"Yes!" Not daring to say anything else, the apprentice turned around and left.

"How is it?"

Hall Master Feng asked.

"Wait a moment!"

Grandmaster Qing Yang didn't explain anything. Instead, he continued circling around the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast. In the midst, he plucked a strand of fur and pulled up its eyelids. A deep frown was etched on his forehead, and he seemed to be trying to deduce the condition.

....

"Can physicians treat savage beasts too?"

Seeing Grandmaster Qing Yang in deep thoughts, Zhang Xuan asked.

"Grandmaster Qing Yang is the best grandmaster physician in Beiwu Kingdom. It's said that he has already reached 2-star pinnacle, and is just a step away from reaching 3-star. Many of the illnesses which the Beast Hall was stumped by was treated by him!"

Yun Tao said with a suppressed voice.

"The fundamental theories behind illnesses, be it for a human or a beast, are the same. Since he is able to treat humans, naturally, he is able to treat beasts as well! Otherwise, how can physicians, despite their lacking combat ability, be ranked among the top of

the Upper Nine Paths?"

Hearing their conversation, Mo Yu interjected.

Without a doubt, the master teacher was the number one occupation among the Upper Nine Paths. On the other hand, the rankings for the other occupations were blurred, and there wasn't a standardized ranking. Even so, apothecary, physician, formation master, and beast tamer were commonly accepted to be the few occupations which ranked at the front, and their practitioners were highly respected.

Compared to formation master and beast tamer, physician, as an occupation, possessed no fighting ability at all. However, it was able to be ranked alongside them because their capability extended beyond just treating humans.

"Aren't you skilled in beast taming? I thought that you are knowledgeable in everything. Why, do you know nothing about the Way of Medicine?"

Seeing Zhang Xuan's confused expression, Mo Yu lifted her head haughtily.

Aren't you formidable, taming a savage beast just by beating it up?

Yet, to know nothing about the Way of Medicine! You shouldn't have acted so arrogantly. Embarrassed now, aren't you?

"Err...." Hearing the other party words, Zhang Xuan smiled awkwardly.

The books on the Way of Medicine in Tianxuan Kingdom were far too lacking, and the only physician he knew was Master Yuanyu. Furthermore, he had merely conversed with him on painting.

As such, Zhang Xuan didn't know much about physician as an occupation.

This was the first time he heard that a physician could treat savage beasts as well.

"Not only is Mo Yu xiaojie a 1-star beast tamer, 1-star apothecary, and a master teacher apprentice, she is an apprentice physician as well!" Yun Tao whispered to Zhang Xuan with a hushed voice. His admiration for Mo Yu gleamed in his eyes.

"Apprentice physician?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Even though this Mo Yu was rather arrogant, she did have the achievements to back it up.

Despite her young age, she was adept in numerous occupations. Of all of the people Zhang Xuan had met, she was probably the most talented one.

"There are some points of overlap between a physician and an apothecary, so I went ahead to learn a little. For me, it isn't difficult at all! After this, I'll be returning to Tianwu Kingdom to take the physician examination!" Mo Yu chuckled lightly.

For what seemed to be an incredibly profound occupation in the eyes of others, to Mo Yu, it was as simple as playing house.

She had always towered over others as a genius, but over here, she had been humiliated time and again because of this Zhang Xuan. Thus, upon seeing that the other party knew nothing about physicians, she decided to leverage this fact against the other party and rebuild her confidence.

She thought that she could win his admiration just by saying so, but when she turned to look at him, he had already disappeared from sight.

"Damn it!"

Stomping her feet, her face flushed with anger.

....

"Did you manage to diagnose anything? Seeing a deep frown on Grandmaster Qing Yang's forehead, Hall Master Feng asked once more.

"Un, I have a rough idea on its condition now. I should be able to deduce what it's suffering from...."

Grandmaster Qing Yang nodded. Halfway through his words, his face suddenly darkened and he bellowed, "What are you doing?"

Hearing his voice, everyone turned their gazes over. Unknowingly, a youngster was already standing before the Howling Firmament Beast. After stretching his hands over.... he touched its head.

Internal heat is a concept of traditional Chinese medicine. It is normally associated with a body's discomfort and various symptoms.

Chapter 256

I Said That You Are an Inept Physician

"This...."

Seeing the actions of the youngster, everyone became dumbfounded.

Isn't this fellow too brazen!

Don't you see that the grandmaster physician is examining the Howling Firmament Beast?

Why did you come over? Furthermore....

This is a Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast, a Zongshi realm savage beast, not your family's pet. Touching it.... as if it were a domesticated dog, what in the world are you up to?

"I, too, would like to take a look to see what this Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast is suffering from!"

Seeing the doubt in everyone's eyes, the youngster turned around and smiled.

"Hmph!"

Hearing his words, Mo Yu harrumphed.

She recognized the person as soon as he turned around. It was the person who had been embarrassing her time and time again, Zhang Xuan.

No wonder he disappeared just now! He had headed forward to touch the Howling Firmament Beast.

Hall Master Feng invited us over to view how Grandmaster Qing Yang would treat the savage beast. We're here to learn, so we should remain obediently at our spots and observe the proceedings quietly. Yet, to interrupt the other party's diagnosis....

Why the heck are you trying to touch it!

Aren't you asking for a scolding?

As expected, the moment this thought appeared in her mind, Grandmaster Qing Yang's face steeled and his eyes narrowed.

"Audacious!"

Flinging his sleeves, he turned to Hall Master Feng and criticized sharply, "Is this how the people in the Beast Hall act? Are they usually this undisciplined? Take a look.... Does he even know what he is looking at? To be touching around so casually despite knowing nothing at all, how conceited can one be!"

"Grandmaster, calm down. He didn't do it intentionally. He is probably just worried about the Howling Firmament Beast...."

Not expecting Zhang Xuan to act so rashly so as to run forward to touch the Howling Firmament Beast, Hall Master Feng tried to placate Grandmaster Qing Yang immediately.

"After years of working together, you should know that I need absolute silence during my treatment!"

Interrupting his words, Grandmaster Qing Yang spoke haughtily.

"I know, but...."

"It's good that you know, there are no 'buts'. Since we've been friends for numerous years, I won't pursue this matter. However, this shouldn't be a place where an incompetent nobody can enter. I am in the midst of treating the Howling Firmament Beast, so chase all of them out." After finishing his words, Grandmaster Qing Yang waved his hands arrogantly.

Who was he?

A grandmaster physician, a highly respected figure in the Beiwu Kingdom. While he's in the midst of treating someone, a fellow suddenly popped out and said that he would like to take a look as well. What do you know about the Way of Medicine? Do you know what to look for?

"Please calm down, Grandmaster Qing Yang. These few youngsters are beast tamers who just passed the examination today. The reason why I brought them over was so that they can watch the treatment process. They definitely didn't mean to offend you!" Hall Master Feng said.

"Indeed. Beast Tamer Zhang merely touched the Howling Firmament Beast out of curiosity. I guarantee you that it won't happen again!"

Beast Tamer Lu walked up to persuade him as well.

"Hmph, I will let this matter go on your account then. I hope that the Beast Hall can be more disciplined in the future! To treat someone, I require absolute silence. Not everyone is qualified to watch the proceedings, and my treatment isn't something just anyone can understand! If some ignorant fool were to mess about, interfere with the treatment process, and delay the optimal treatment timing, can any of you take responsibility?"

Grandmaster Qing Yang harrumphed as he scanned the surroundings, him holding an irrefutable authority.

"Yes, yes!" Hall Master Feng hurriedly nodded.

The standings of beast tamers and physicians were similar, but given that he was the one who had a request for the other party, he had no choice but to lower his head.

This was the only person who was capable of treating the Howling Firmament Beast. Thus, even though the physician was speaking so harshly, he had no choice but to tolerate it.

"Un!"

Observing the other party's pleasant attitude, Grandmaster Qing Yang decided to not pursue the matter. Instead, he turned his attention to the unconscious Howling Firmament Beast.

"You said earlier that you have identified the problem. Is there a way to treat its illness?" Hall Master Feng asked nervously.

"After my initial diagnosis, I have confirmed the root of its illness." Grandmaster Qing Yang gestured grandly.

Everyone's eyes lit up.

As expected of a grandmaster physician. He was able to locate the root of the problem swiftly.

One must know that the three 2-star beast tamers and numerous 1-star beast tamers have examined the Howling Firmament Beast for two whole days but to no avail.

Amidst everyone's expectant gazes, Grandmaster Qing Yang nodded his head in satisfaction. He calmly said, "Given how this Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast is vigorous at night, filled with internal heat, and often howled to the heavens, I suspect that.... it's craving for a mate!"

"Craving for a mate?"

"That's right. Savage beasts possess libido as well, and this libido heightens during the autumn season, reaching a level where it is hard for them to control itself. Based on what I saw previously, its body is warm and it urgently needs an outlet to vent its frustrations. However, as it is unable to find a release, it is growing more and more restless. As time went by, the internal heat that gathered within its body diffused into his organs, causing him to descend into a coma."

Grandmaster Qing Yang lifted his head slightly, and he seemed to be glowing with wisdom.

"We've also thought of the possibility before, just that.... given the age of the savage beast, it is unlikely that it has reached that point...." Hall Master Feng asked doubtfully.

"Savage beasts cannot be gauged using the human standards. Once its bodily functions mature, it will experience libido. Its symptoms of being unable to sleep at night, howling toward the skies, and such are all signs of its desire for a mate. It's impossible for me to be mistaken!" Grandmaster Qing Yang turned to look at the crowd, and there was a bizarre glint in his eyes which exerted pressure on those he gazed upon. "Why? Do you doubt my diagnosis?"

"That's not it, just that...." Hall Master Feng shook his head, choosing not to linger on this problem. Rather, he looked at Grandmaster Qing Yang anxiously, "So.... How can such an illness be treated?"

"Even though it appears complicated, once the root of the problem is identified, it isn't

that difficult to solve. Since it wishes to look for a mate, we can just find one for it!" Grandmaster Qing Yang smiled.

"Find one?"

A bitter expression appeared on Hall Master Feng's face.

The other two 2-star beast tamers also shook their heads.

"It's not that we don't want to find one for it, but the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast is a rare species. It is nearly impossible to find another female which is of a comparable age!"

An aerial savage beast such as the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast which could possess the strength of a Zongshi before maturing was extremely rare. Even considering the entire range of the vast Xuanluo Mountain Range, it was unlikely for there to be more than two of them.

More importantly, it is capable of flying at incredible speed. Even if they happen to find one, how can they possibly capture and tame it?

The reason why there was a Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast in the Beast Hall was that they had raised it from young, even going to the extent of building a residence for it and sending apprentices to wait upon it. That was the main reason why it chose to remain here. Honestly speaking.... Until now, no one had managed to tame it, and it hadn't established a contract with anyone either.

It's not that they didn't want to do it, but that it was impossible for them to do it!

The Howling Firmament Beast was prejudiced against humans, so taming it completely was impossible. Assuming if it was tamed completely, it would have been able to communicate with its master. If so, the beast tamers would know what was wrong with it and treat it by themselves. They wouldn't have had to go through so much trouble as to invite Grandmaster Qing Yang to diagnose its condition.

Since they weren't even able to tame a Howling Firmament Beast which they raised from young, how could they possibly bring a mate for it within a short period of time?

Clearly, this isn't a feasible solution!

"It is impossible to find another one?"

"Yes!" Hall Master Feng nodded. "Grandmaster Qing Yang, please look for another solution. I'm willing to give anything as long as the Howling Firmament Beast can be saved!"

"I do have a solution, and it will solve the problem once and for all. Just that.... this solution will be slightly troublesome." Grandmaster Qing Yang hesitated for a moment.

"Since there's a solution, then I'll have to trouble you to hurry up and treat it." The eyes of Hall Master Feng and the others lit up as they hurriedly said.

"Un, alright!" Placing his hands behind his back, Grandmaster Qing Yang nodded his head. "Even if it's impossible to find a mate for it, there's actually another simple solution to curb its frustration. That's.... castration! As long as the operation is successful, it will not be plagued by such problems in the future. It'll then be able to focus its attention on working for the Beast Hall."

"Castration?"

Hall Master Feng and the others became dumbfounded.

"Only through castration will it be able to calm its mind. At the very least, it will not feel frustrated and be overwhelmed with heat every day, and such a situation wouldn't occur again."

Grandmaster Qing Yang turned to Hall Master Feng and questioned, "Aren't there many other savage beasts in the Beast Hall which were castrated to avoid trouble?"

"This...." Hall Master Feng hesitated before nodding.

There were plenty of savage beasts in the Beast Hall who were castrated upon birth. This way, its attention wouldn't be diverted to its other needs, and it would be more obedient to its master.

"Alright, this is my diagnosis. You should give it some thought. If you want to go through with it, you should make your decision quickly. It is clear that this fellow will not hold on for long. If you don't resolve the problem soon, I'm afraid that it might not survive even until tomorrow!"

At this point, Grandmaster Qing Yang stopped speaking and stood quietly on the spot as he waited for the others to make their choice.

"Must we do this?"

Hall Master Feng and the others stared at one another in dilemma.

The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast had been with them since young. They had been together for many years, and the beast tamers had already regarded it as their kin. To castrate it.... They really couldn't bring themselves to do it.

Besides, while there were plenty of precedents of savage beasts having been castrated in the Beast Hall, a significant number of them didn't survive the operation and died on the spot.

The Howling Firmament Beast was critically ill, and at this moment, it had already descended into a coma. Conducting such an operation when it wasn't in a good physical condition bore a huge risk to its life.

Besides, a Zongshi realm savage beast possesses wisdom. If they were to infuriate it by doing so, it was likely that it might just leave the Beast Hall permanently. In fact, it might even try to exact vengeance on the Beast Hall, and this would put the Beast Hall at a huge peril.

It wasn't that there were no precedents to such a situation. There were other Beast Halls who had met with similar situations and castrated a Half-Zongshi savage beast. This infuriated the savage beast, and not only did it leave the Beast Hall, it viewed the personnel of the Beast Hall with enmity and often returned to wreck havoc.

Eventually, the Beast Hall could only dispatch experts to kill it.

It's said that after it was killed, the master of the savage beast cried for three days straight. Due to his excessive grief, his zhenqi dissipated and he died a few days later.

Just like humans, savage beasts have to be respected.

Castrating the other party without informing it is a type of extreme humiliation.

"Grandmaster Qing Yang, is there any other solution? This.... really isn't an easy choice!"

After hesitating for a moment, Hall Master Feng asked.

"This is already the best solution to the problem! If you are unwilling to do so, we can just forget the matter. I have already presented my diagnosis and the treatment to you, and it's your choice to go through with it or not. However, if there are any other problems in the future, you don't need to dream of looking for me!" Grandmaster Qing Yang harrumphed in displeasure.

He had presented the root of the problem and the treatment method, yet the other party kept questioning his judgment. Did they not trust his capability as a grandmaster physician?

"This...."

Upon hearing the other party's words, Hall Master Feng gritted his teeth and decided to go ahead with the other party's solution. However, before he could speak, an impassive voice suddenly echoed in the air.

"In the past, I've heard that inept physicians could kill their patients. Back then, I thought that it was impossible, but to think that I would be seeing one right before me...."

"What did you say?"

Grandmaster Qing Yang burst into an outrage. He turned his head over immediately and saw a youngster standing amidst the crowd, looking at him with a calm expression.

It was the fellow who sneaked forward to touch the Howling Firmament Beast awhile ago.

Zhang Xuan!

"I say that you are an inept physician! If you don't understand what I'm saying...."

With a serious expression, Zhang Xuan said, "It means that you are a fool with inferior medical skills. When you are unable to determine the root of the illness, you make up a random diagnosis using your own imagination!"

Chapter 257

What Else Can You Be If Not an Inept Physician?

"He said that Grandmaster Qing Yang is an inept physician?"

"He said that he is a fool with inferior medical skills?"

Everyone was stunned.

Even Mo Yu, who was resentful against Zhang Xuan, was stunned.

To say that Grandmaster Qing Yang is an inept physician.... This is equivalent to insulting the other party's professionalism, and there is no way for reconciliation.

Why in the world is a fellow like you, who is ignorant in the Way of Medicine, acting big?

Even though it wasn't common for a savage beast to be castrated, it wasn't as though it had never happened before. If they don't castrate it, is there any other solution to treating the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast?

"Beast Tamer Zhang...."

Not expecting him to insult Grandmaster Qing Yang all of a sudden, Hall Master Feng's complexion darkened. He immediately turned to Grandmaster Qing Yang and tried to appease him, "Grandmaster Qing Yang, don't get angry. He isn't doing this on purpose...."

"Shut up!"

Grandmaster Qing Yang's expression warped savagely. As though a furious lion, he stared coldly at the young man before him. With a frosty tone, he declared, "I, Qing Yang, have been practicing medicine for more than thirty-nine years. I have saved countless lives and relieved countless people of their ailments. This is the first time I have been insulted by someone like that. Lad, regardless of whether you are a beast tamer or not and who is backing you, if you don't explain yourself clearly today, don't

blame me for getting nasty!"

Boom!

The moment he finished speaking, a powerful aura immediately burst forth from him, reaching even the heavens. It was so powerful and repressive that it forced Yun Tao and the others to retreat continuously.

Grandmaster Qing Yang is a Zongshi expert!

Regardless of occupation, while talent was a factor, one required a cultivation realm that could match up with it. All those who have reached 2-star were mainly Zongshi realm experts. This was also the reason why those who have reached 2-star were termed as grandmasters. This wasn't just a show of respect toward the person's mastery in the occupation, but to the person's cultivation and strength as well.

As the most skilled physician in Beiwu Kingdom, Qing Yang had never suffered such humiliation while practicing his medical art. If not for his sophistication, he would have already lashed out at Zhang Xuan.

"The reason why you've never been insulted.... is because you've never met me. If you've met me earlier, you would have long been insulted!"

Despite the other party's intimidation, Zhang Xuan simply looked at him indifferently.

Grandmaster Qing Yang's eyebrows twitched, "Do you think that I dare not kill you?"

"Kill me? Being unable to see through the Howling Firmament Beast's illness, you came up with a nonsensical diagnosis. If it were to be treated as you said, not only will the Howling Firmament Beast not be saved, it will die on the spot.... Is this the result of your diagnosis? What else can you be if not an inept physician? And you still want to kill me.... Despite erring so severely, you refuse to allow anyone to talk about it. How can one be so thick-skinned?" Zhang Xuan lifted his eyebrows.

"You...."

Upon hearing those words, Grandmaster Qing Yang was so maddened that he almost spurted a mouthful of blood.

After releasing his full might as a Zongshi realm expert, he thought that the other party

would apologize to him fearfully. Yet, not only did Zhang Xuan continue to criticize him boldly, he even reprimanded him for being thick-skinned....

A dignified grandmaster physician getting scolded by a young lad in public. He felt so humiliated that he was about to go insane.

"Do you feel indignant? Fine, I'll explain it to you then!"

Just as Grandmaster Qing Yang was about to fly into a rage, the young man approached and stood before the Howling Firmament Beast.

"The most direct way to determine the age of a Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast is through its teeth. The teeth exposed outside for a mature Howling Firmament Beast will be exactly three chi and three cun. I believe that all beast tamers should know about it, so I need not elaborate more!"

(Three chi and three cun ~1.1m)

Zhang Xuan pointed to the Howling Firmament Beast and said, "The teeth of this fellow are only two chi and seven cun long, proving that it is still some age away from adulthood. If I'm not wrong, it should be only seventeen-year-old. Based on the two hundred years lifespan of a Howling Firmament Beast, it should still be a child.... I would like to ask you, how can a prepubescent savage beast possess libido?"

(Two chi and seven cun ~90cm)

Initially, Hall Master Feng and the others thought that Zhang Xuan was just causing trouble. However, after hearing his words, they were all taken aback.

Other people might not know how old this Howling Firmament Beast was, but they were extremely clear of this. Ever since it was an infant, it had been living in the Beast Hall. It had been seventeen years since then. Zhang Xuan's words were completely accurate.

If one didn't know beforehand, it was impossible for one to fathom that a fellow possessing such a gigantic body would be merely seventeen-years-old.

For a savage beast which has a lifespan of two hundred years, it was no different from a seven to eight-year-old human.

"It is a savage beast...." Grandmaster Qing Yang harrumphed. However, before he could finish his words, Zhang Xuan had already interrupted him.

"Don't tell me that the physical condition of a savage beast is different from that of a human, so their physical development is different. If this fellow is truly suffering from excessive libido and craves for a mate, it would only suffer from excessive heat, discomfort, and a fiery temper. Libido causing one to go into a coma like that.... Grandmaster Qing Yang, for you to make such a judgment, can it be that.... you experience the same phenomenon?"

Zhang Xuan asked.

"That's true!"

"Even if it is overwhelmed by lust, it would only be in discomfort. I have never heard of anyone going into a coma from an overwhelming desire for the female body!"

Everyone was taken aback by Zhang Xuan's words. Finding his explanation logical, they began to mutter in agreement.

It is a physiological need for a mature adult to look for a mate. This isn't applicable to just savages beast, the same goes for humans as well. However, never have they ever heard of a person being stifled to the point of going into a coma just because they were unable to find a girlfriend.

That isn't logical at all!

"Hmph!"

Grandmaster Qing Yang's face flushed furiously. He wanted to refute Zhang Xuan's words, but he found himself unable to say a single thing. Flinging his sleeves, he harrumphed, "Since you claim that it isn't libido, what do you think caused it to be agitated then? Also, why would it run about as though finding an outlet for its inexhaustible energy during the nights of the full moon?"

"Does being agitated and possessing inexhaustible energy at night mean that it is looking for a mate? What reasoning is that?" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "If that's the reason, why would its appetite dwindle, with nothing able to catch its attention?"

Grandmaster Qing Yang was stumped.

Even if it were looking for a mate, despite being unable to talk as a savage beast, there were plenty of ways for it to express himself. It was truly inexplicable why it would it refuse food and be disinterested in everything.

"From the words of the apprentice, we know that ten days ago, the Howling Firmament Beast merely suffered from a lack of appetite. As the days went by, his condition worsened, and by morning today, it was unable to endure any longer and finally fainted. If it was truly just looking for a mate, it could just fly away. There doesn't seem to be any chains binding it to the Beast Hall, preventing it from flying away!"

The crowd nodded their heads.

The Beast Hall would try to fawn up to that fellow at every available chance, how can they possibly bind it?

If it was truly distressed by the lack of a mate, it could simply fly outward to look for one itself. There was no reason why it should stifle itself in the courtyard to the point of fainting!

Upon hearing his analysis, everyone started to doubt Grandmaster Qing Yang's diagnosis. They turned to look at him with a bizarre expression.

"Then.... What do you say it is?"

Grandmaster Qing Yang's complexion paled. He realized that he had neglected many details, and at this moment, his rage had already vanished. Unable to hold himself back, he asked.

"Since it's not seeking a mate, the answer is simple.... The Howling Firmament Beast is either truly critically ill or is plagued by some other problem!" Zhang Xuan surveyed the crowd. "Everyone, you should look at the claw of the Howling Firmament Beast."

"Different from the usual eagle-type savage beast, the Howling Firmament Beast has a thick layer of flesh covering its claws, similar to human feet. Under normal conditions, the claw should be greenish-gold in color. However, at this moment, red veins can be seen within the flesh."

Everyone immediately turned to look at the claw of the Howling Firmament Beast. Taking a closer look, they realized that there were really blood-red veins.

The veins were extremely thin, similar to the capillaries in a human's body. If one didn't pay careful attention to it, it was easy to neglect.

"Most savage beasts have a meat crown, and the Howling Firmament Beast isn't an exception either. Under normal circumstances, the meat crown would be slightly red. However, it is slightly pale at the moment. Even though it is inconspicuous, it remains visible to the eye." Zhang Xuan said.

Everyone quickly looked over, and it was exactly as Zhang Xuan said.

"What kind of illness is this?"

Zhang Xuan's ability to point out the numerous inconspicuous symptoms on the Howling Firmament Beast had convinced the crowd of his judgment. Unable to hold himself back, Hall Master Feng asked immediately.

"In a sense, it isn't really an illness. In fact, I should congratulate Hall Master Feng."

Zhang Xuan smiled.

"Congratulate? Why would you congratulate me?"

Hall Master Feng was stunned.

The Howling Firmament Beast was still in a coma, and it was hard to tell whether its life was still in danger or not. Furthermore, if you know the cause of the problem, you should know the solution as well. Such congratulatory words should only be said after it rises from its coma, why would you say it now?

"If I'm not wrong, the Howling Firmament Beast is probably undergoing Bloodline Evolution!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Bloodline Evolution? How.... How is that possible?"

Hall Master Feng was stunned. The rest of the crowd also found Zhang Xuan's words inconceivable.

The Bloodline Evolution of a savage beast was similar to a mutation in the genes, it was extremely rare. Furthermore, without a trigger, it was impossible for it to happen.

The trigger could be the absorption of an even purer blood essence or the consumption of precious herbs....

However, the Howling Firmament Beast didn't appear to have experienced any of the two.

Furthermore, a Bloodline Evolution shouldn't have caused the Howling Firmament Beast to descend into a coma, as though it had fallen into critical illness.

Seeing the disbelief in everyone's eyes, Zhang Xuan chuckled and turned to Hall Master Feng, "Half a month ago, did the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast visit a location dense in yin energy?"

"This.... Half a month ago, it ferried a person to the Yin Tempest Valley!" The one who replied was Beast Tamer Wang.

He was the one who drove the beast there, so he remembered the details clearly.

"The Yin Tempest Valley is dense in yin energy, and an extremely potent yin attribute fruit called Yin Tempest Fruit grows there. It has the ability to raise the cultivation of a person whose physical constitution is aligned toward the yin. If I'm not wrong, the person probably presented this fruit as payment!" Zhang Xuan said.

"That's right!" Beast Tamer Wang nodded.

One could pay the fee for the Beast Mount through gold coins or rare herbs.

The Yin Tempest Fruit was an extremely well-known commodity, and it was worth a fortune. Furthermore, it was the kind of product which rarely appeared in the market, and one might not be able to buy it even if one had money. Naturally, Beast Tamer Wang accepted his payment.

"The cause of the incident is the Yin Tempest Fruit!"

Zhang Xuan smiled, "Everyone should be aware of the gender of the Howling Firmament Beast, male. As such, it has overwhelming yang attribute within its body. After consuming the Yin Tempest Fruit, the yin and yang clashed with one another. Even so, the worst that would have happened to it was discomfort. Given its gigantic physique, it was just a matter of time before it tides through the period! However, at this point, you fed it Spirit Rejuvenation Water."

"The Spirit Rejuvenation Water calms one's mind, revitalizes one's spirit, and eases one's agitation. The main ingredient in it is [Fermented Mother Grass]."

"This is a neutral medicinal herb which served as a mediating factor. Logically speaking, no matter how many of it one consumed, it wouldn't cause any adverse effect. However, it just happened that the property of this herb clashes with the nature of the Yin Tempest Fruit. Upon contact, the yin aura of the Yin Tempest Fruit is amplified by more than three times. These two happened to be the main ingredients required for the forging of [Unravel Yang Pill], and it is extremely potent in awakening yang attribute physical constitutions."

Zhang Xuan continued, "It was due to the stimulating of the yang attribute within the body of the Howling Firmament Beast that it was unable to sleep at night and possess inexhaustible energy, as though afflicted with overwhelming libido!"

"If this was only it, it would have been able to tide through the matter. As long as the yin and yang within its body achieve a balance, the problem would be resolved. However, it is a pity that.... Hall Master Feng had someone feed it two [Heat Dissipation Pill]

At this point, Zhang Xuan shook his head in pity. "The Heat Dissipation Grass contains the Arctic Grass, and the Arctic Grass dispels yang flames within one's body.... The yang energy within the Howling Firmament Beast was stimulated when it was fed this. Not to mention, it had consumed two at once. That is equivalent to throwing ice cubes onto a fire seedling.... With the clash of hot and cold within its body, it is already extremely fortunate that it didn't die on the spot!"

Honestly speaking, the Howling Firmament Beast was truly a pitiful soul. Initially, it would have been able to recover on its own after resting for a few days. Yet, under the kind intentions of those around it, it was sent to the brink of death.

And yet, they claimed that they were trying to treat it.... More like murdering it!

The complexion of Hall Master Feng and the other beast tamers immediately turned awful.

Clearly, they hadn't expected that the condition of the Howling Firmament Beast was a result of them.... feeding the wrong medication!

"Try recalling the matter. Is it after feeding the medication that the condition of the

Howling Firmament Beast slowly deteriorated?" Zhang Xuan continued asking.

"Yes...." Recalling the words of the beast tamer apprentice, everyone couldn't help but nod in agreement.

That was indeed the case.

No one could have imagined that feeding it a common medication would cause such adverse side effects.

"Currently, the yang energy is currently in conflict with the yin aura within its body. If you were to castrate it right now, the yang energy would be quenched and the yin energy would overwhelm it. In less than two hours, it would breathe its last!"

At this point, Zhang Xuan turned to Grandmaster Qing Yang and said, "This is also the reason why I said that you are an inept physician. If the treatment is carried out as you've said, not only will the Howling Firmament Beast not be saved, it would have already become a corpse by now."

"This...."

Grandmaster Qing Yang felt his body turn cold. As a 2-star physician, he had an in-depth knowledge in the Way of Medicine. The other party's deduction was logical and backed up by facts, to the point that he was unable to pick any flaws with it at all. It was as though the other party has witnessed the entire scene for himself, and he couldn't help but feel admiration for the other party's capability. He felt that there was a need for him to refute the other party's words to protect his reputation, but he couldn't find a word to say.

"Then, what about the Bloodline Evolution you spoke about previously?"

Afraid that Grandmaster Qing Yang would be put in a difficult position, Hall Master Feng quickly interjected and changed the topic.

"Once the stimulated yang energy within its body stabilizes, it will undergo a Bloodline Evolution. On the other hand, if it fails to strikes a balance between the yin and yang, it would die. That's to say, if the Howling Firmament Beast is able to survive this ordeal, its cultivation will reach new heights. If not, death awaits."

"Then.... Is there any way to help it?" Hall Master Feng asked anxiously.

"Of course there is. However.... I will need the help of an apothecary." Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before saying.

"Mo Yu xiaojie is an official apothecary. She can help you." Yun Tao hurriedly said.

Everyone's gazes shot toward Mo Yu immediately.

"I am willing to help. What do I have to do?" Mo Yu placed her hands behind her back confidently.

Even though she didn't like the fellow before her, she wanted to help save the Howling Firmament Beast.

Besides, even though she was inferior to the other party in the other aspects, this provided her an opportunity to showcase her talents as an apothecary and cleanse herself of her past shame.

Aren't you an incredible beast tamer, the senior of master teachers, and a capable physician?

I may not be able to compare to you in these fields, but at the very least, I am able to forge pills!

At the very least, I'm a 1-star apothecary!

Thus, she proudly stepped out from the crowd and asked the other party what she should do. Yet, she was welcomed with a frown and a questioning tone.

"You.... can you forge pills?"

"You...."

Mo Yu staggered. She nearly exploded upon hearing those words.

Can't you say anything good?

I am a 1-star apothecary, of course, I can forge pills!

How can one become an apothecary without being able to forge pills?

Even though she knew that this fellow couldn't speak any good words, she didn't expect him to be so hateful.

Gritting her teeth, her breathing hastened, and her chest expanded and contracted rapidly. "Have you ever seen an apothecary who is unable to forge pills?"

"I have...." Zhang Xuan nodded. "I was worried that you passed the apothecary examination through Pill Debate. If so, you probably won't be able to forge pills...."

"Pill Debate? Only those who have reached a high mastery in the Way of Pills are capable of passing the examination!"

Reverence brimmed in Mo Yu's eyes, "All of the seniors who managed to pass the Pill Debate are amazing talents, and yet, you say that they are unable to forge pills? What a joke! If you were to say such words in the Apothecary Guild, you will surely be beaten to death...."

Before she could finish her words, the young man before her silently took out an apothecary emblem and pinned it on his shirt. While scratching his head, an awkward expression appeared on his face.

"I am the type of senior you are talking about, and I happen to be unable to forge pills...."

Chapter 258

Guidance on Pill Forging

This time, Mo Yu really cried.

Are you toying with me?

The moment I scored the top in the beast tamer examination, you ran over immediately, pummeled my savage beast, and became an official beast tamer.

Just when I proudly declared that I am an apprentice physician, you popped out once more. Not only did you criticize a 2-star physician, you even explained the illness of the Howling Firmament Beast and offered a solution to the problem....

Just when I thought that I can brag about my accomplishments in the Way of Pills.... you took out your apothecary emblem and said that you passed the examination through Pill Debate....

Who in the world did I offend?

Can't you allow me to show off my capabilities for a bit?

"Pill Debate? What is that?"

"It is an examination where one challenges ten official apothecaries and forces them to admit defeat! I heard that this method of examination is extremely harsh, and the success rate isn't even one percent."

"An examination with a success rate below one percent?"

....

Most of the beast tamers present weren't knowledgeable about apothecaries. Upon hearing the explanation, they became dumbfounded.

How incredible does one have to be in order to force ten official apothecaries to admit

defeat?

All along, Yun Tao thought that he was a genius. However, after the various affairs, he finally understood that his talents were nothing in comparison to this Elder Zhang Xuan.

Formation, beast taming, medical skills, master teacher, pill forging....

Brother, is there anything in the world that you aren't good at?

I'll go and learn that now....

Forget it, I think I better not ask about it. Every single time I ask you about something, you would say that you don't know about it. I would be naive if I take your words for it. Judging from the usual pattern, I'm afraid that I would be slapped so hard that I wouldn't be able to recover from the blow.... After all, look at Mo Yu xiaojie.

Even Yun Tao couldn't help but pity Mo Yu.

In any case, this fellow is a monster. It is best to not compare ourselves with him.

"Since you are able to forge pills, you should have a pill cauldron with you or something like that, right?"

Ignoring everyone's shock, Zhang Xuan turned to Mo Yu.

"Un!"

Gritting her teeth, Mo Yu suppressed her anger and harrumphed.

"Alright!" Zhang Xuan nodded. Then, turning to the other beast tamers, he said, "Hall Master Feng, I'll need the medicinal herbs that I'm about to recite. A stalk of thirty-year-old Searing Sun Grass, a tael of fifteen-year-old Solar Flame Grass...."

In one single breath, he mentioned the names of a bunch of medicinal herbs.

Upon hearing the names of these herbs, Mo Yu was stunned. Then, a thought appeared in her mind and her eyes narrowed, "You.... It can't be that you want me to forge.... the Searing Sun Pill?"

"That's right!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head as though it was the most natural thing to do.

"Are you joking? The Searing Sun Pill is a grade-2 pinnacle pill while I am merely a 1-star apothecary. How can I possibly succeed?"

Mo Yu's body trembled and she nearly fainted.

Is there something wrong with this fellow's head?

Forged using nine yang attribute medicinal herbs, the Searing Sun Pill was rich in yang energy. As a grade-2 pinnacle pill, even 3-star apothecaries would find it hard to successfully forge. Yet, Zhang Xuan was trying to have a 1-star apothecary like her to do it....

Are you sure you aren't mistaken?

"Rest assured, I will guide you. It is sufficient as long as you know how to use a cauldron and control the temperature of the fire. It is actually very easy!"

Zhang Xuan said calmly.

"Use a cauldron? Control the temperature of the fire? Very easy?"

Mo Yu wished she hadn't listened to his explanation. After hearing his words, she could feel the final thread of her rationality snapping.

Brother, are you really an apothecary?

Even apprentices know such fundamental knowledge. If pill forging were that easy, everyone would have become a grandmaster apothecary!

Pill forging isn't just a mere routine one-plus-one-equals-to-two. More importantly, one has to have an absolute control over the temperature and timing during forging. She had just reached 1-star this year, and she wasn't capable of forging even the slightly more incredible grade-1 pills. Yet, Zhang Xuan was trying to get her to forge a grade-2 pinnacle pill....

More importantly, one has to be forging the pill by oneself to grasp the progress of the forging in real time so that he can decide on the next course of action. If he wasn't

going to be involved in the pill forging process.... how was he going to guide her?

Where does this fellow's confidence come from?

"Indeed. If you feel that you're unable to rise up to the task, I can find another apprentice. It might be difficult to find 1-star apothecary in the Beast Hall, but it should still be possible to find a few apprentice apothecary!" Seeing her frenzied expression, Zhang Xuan frowned.

There must be something wrong with this woman. Do you have to react so greatly to everything I say?

I have already told you that I will guide you, so why are you spouting so much nonsense?

If you feel like you aren't able to do it, I can just look for another person.

"There's no need for it, I'll do it!"

Seeing the other party's contemptuous gaze, Mo Yu felt as though her heart had been scratched by ten thousand cats. Unable to bear the humiliation, she gritted her teeth and accepted the task.

Other than that person in Tianwu Kingdom, she was a top-notch genius in all fields. She hadn't expected to be scorned by a countryside bumpkin in such a remote location.

Damn it!

Fine. Trying to act incredible? I'll see what you do when I fail to forge a grade-2 pinnacle pill later on!

"Un. Later on, follow my instructions strictly. There mustn't even be the slightest error." Afraid that the other party would cause trouble, Zhang Xuan reminded.

"Don't worry!"

Mo Yu's obstinate nature surfaced.

"That's good then!"

Zhang Xuan nodded and did not speak further.

Knowing that this matter was urgent, Hall Master Feng didn't dare to dawdle. Soon, a bunch of medicinal herbs appeared before them.

Even though this wasn't the Apothecary Guild, as savage beasts have an innate interest in medicinal herbs, the Beast Hall had an abundant inventory of herbs.

"Let's begin!"

Upon the arrival of the medicinal herbs, Zhang Xuan examined them thoroughly and made sure they were sufficiently mature to be used for the pill. Thus, he nodded in satisfaction.

Of all of the occupations, the one Zhang Xuan was the most familiar with was pill-forging.

Putting aside the fact that the first examination he took was the apothecary examination, more importantly, under the effects of the golden book, he had assimilated the knowledge contained within the books he flipped through in the Apothecary Guild into his mind.

In terms of fundamentals, even 2-star and 3-star apothecaries would find it difficult to match up to him.

"Un!"

Albeit stifled, Mo Yu didn't waste any time. With a flick of her wrist, a massive cauldron appeared before her. She then lit up the flames immediately to warm the cauldron. Her smooth motions bore testimony to her strong foundation in the occupation.

Even though she was hundred percent sure it was impossible for her to forge a grade-2 pill, given how confident the other party was, she decided to give it a try. After all, it wasn't too late to mock him after they fail.

"Not bad!"

Seeing her fluid motions, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

As expected of a genius from Tianwu Kingdom. Even though Mo Yu was young and

slightly condescending, her skills in pill forging were significantly better than Bai Ming, Chen Xiao, and the others.

As Zhang Xuan thought so, he walked toward the cauldron and casually touched it.

Without saying another word, he stood there unmoving.

"Do you think that.... he will be able to succeed?"

Staring at the duo, Beast Tamer Lu couldn't help but to start feeling worried.

"I've no idea. However, if I were to tell you that someone is able to tame a savage beast by beating it up with the resulting Loyalty Level hitting 45, will you believe it?" Hall Master Feng asked bitterly.

"This.... I would probably have never believed it." Beast Tamer Lu hesitated for a moment before replying.

If someone were to have told him such words before the astonishing sight he witnessed today, he would definitely have beaten the person to death.

To tame a savage beast by beating it up, furthermore, with its Loyalty Level reaching 45.... Isn't that clearly a joke?

However, after witnessing it personally today.... There was no way he could retort even if he wanted to.

This young man before him seemed to be a creator of miracles, rewriting everyone's understanding of the world with every single action.

"I have once seen a 3-star master teacher guide an apprentice apothecary in a Conferred Kingdom. The feat astonished everyone at the scene. To think that I would have another opportunity to witness such a sight!"

Beast Tamer Wang's eyes glowed as he muttered to himself.

"I know about that as well, but the pill forged back then was a grade-1 pill. On the other hand, the pill which Beast Tamer Zhang is going to guide Princess Mo Yu on is a grade-2 pinnacle pill. The difficulties for both tasks are on entirely different levels."

"Indeed, there is a huge difference in difficulty with each increase in the grade of the pill. If a 1-star primary stage apothecary were to be able to forge a grade-2 pinnacle pill, it would definitely pop some eyes!"

Hall Master Feng and Beast Tamer Lu nodded in agreement.

"Look, the pill forging is about to begin!"

They were discussing the matter when the pill forging begun.

Xiong xiong!

The flames in the cauldron burnt furiously. As though a skillful butterfly treading through the flowers, Mo Yu's slim and slender hands flew about the cauldron at a speed so swift that afterimages could be seen.

"Place the Green Kudzu Leaves in. Seven breaths later, place the White Beard Grass in. Then, fourteen breaths later, use the Thousand Illusory Cloud Rippling Hands to place the Searing Sun Grass in...."

With his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan's calm and clear voice sounded. There wasn't the slightest pause or hesitation in it.

Even though the Searing Sun Pill was known to be forged using nine types of yang attribute herbs, many other medicinal herbs had to be placed in to act as mediators. Otherwise, with so many yang attribute herbs placed into the cauldron, it would be a miracle if the cauldron didn't explode.

"Un?"

Initially, Mo Yu didn't think that following the instructions of the other party would allow her to craft a grade-2 pinnacle pill. However, as the medicinal herbs disappeared one after another into the cauldron, the disdain in her mind slowly faded away. Instead, her face grew increasingly grim, and she couldn't help but feel astonished by Zhang Xuan's capability.

She had seen the pill formula for Searing Sun Pill. The nine yang attribute herbs were like nine bombs. Even with other medicinal herbs act as mediators, if one fails to grasp the timing accurately, an explosion would ensue immediately. Many 2-star apothecaries have failed due to a slight lapses in their timings.

She was already more than halfway through the forging process, having thrown in five of the yang attribute medicinal herbs but the cauldron continued to function normally. There were no signs of instability in the pill at all....

That was to say, the sequence and timing of the medicinal herbs thrown in were perfect!

This.... How can this be possible!

One must know that with the difference in one's cultivation, zhenqi, the cauldron, and fuel used makes huge differences in the forging process. As such, during forging, one has to make constant adjustments with no room for any breather.

In fact, if the same person, with a different cultivation and state, were to craft the exact same pill twice, can't use the same sequencing of placing the medicinal herbs!

For such a complex pill formula, there wasn't the slightest instability when following Zhang Xuan's instructions. That was to say, there wasn't the slightest error in his instructions. How could Mo Yu not feel astounded?

More importantly.... How did the other party know her forging techniques and her pill forging standards? There wasn't a single instruction of his that surpassed her current pill forging capability!

She was certain that she had never forged pills before the other party. But if so.... how could he possibly know about her in such great detail?

"Don't let your thoughts wander!"

Mo Yu's mind was wandering when a bellow suddenly echoed by her ear. At this point, she suddenly realized that the temporary lapse in her attention had caused her to throw in a medicinal herb half a breath earlier than the instruction given by the other party.

Gugugugu!

In an instant, the yang energy in the cauldron surged. The energy, that had remained stable all along, seemed as though it had suddenly been set alight. The entire cauldron shook violently.

"Oh no, the cauldron is going to explode!"

There was a random cry from the crowd, and everyone's face warped immediately.

Chapter 259

Cauldron Explosion

"Cauldron explosion?"

Hall Master Feng and the others could not help but clench their fists.

Cauldron explosion is the most fearsome event an apothecary can encounter during pill forging. It is usually due to an apothecary failing to control the energy contained by the medicinal herbs, causing the process to turn violent and uncontrollable.

The moment an explosion happens, the medicinal herbs within, as well as the entire cauldron, will be ruined. The apothecary might also get injured by the impact of the explosion.

The higher the grade of a pill, the more violent the energy contained within, and the higher its tendency to explode during the pill forging process.

If Mo Yu were a 2-star apothecary and that her cultivation had reached Zongshi realm, given her own strength and her grasp over medicinal herbs, she might have been able to suppress the raging strength contained in the cauldron forcefully. But at this moment, the entire cauldron was swaying violently, and it seemed as though it would blow at any moment. It was clear that it was too late to reverse the cauldron explosion.

"Is this is a failure?" Hall Master Feng's complexion looked awful.

He knew how important the Searing Sun Pill was to the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast. If the pill was successfully forged and fed, the yang attribute energy in its body would be augmented. This would increase the chances of it successfully achieving a Bloodline Evolution and raise its strength significantly.

On the other hand, if the pill forging fails, the chances of the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast overcoming its current crisis would be low. Once it fails, it would be difficult for it to ever wake up and only death awaits it.

Before, with Beast Tamer Zhang guiding Mo Yu to forge the pills, he had carried a sliver

of hope. However, looking at the rocking cauldron, he reckoned that it was all over.

The cauldron would definitely explode, and the pill would be ruined.

It was an unchangeable fact.

"It's over...."

Not expecting such a situation to occur, Yun Tao's face paled.

Even though it hadn't been long since he met this young man, his confident smile and his ability to achieve the impossible had long left a deep impression in his mind.

Will this seemingly omnipotent Elder Zhang Xuan fail in this pill forging?

"Who asked you to act so haughtily? You're getting what you deserved!"

Distinct from the tense looks on others' faces, Zhou Xuan and Zhu Jinhuang exchanged gazes and sneered coldly.

Weren't you bragging just now that nothing would go wrong with your guidance....

Pui!

Now that there's a cauldron explosion, I would like to see how you explain yourself later on.

Despite being a brat, you kept acting as though you know everything. See how we'll mock you later on!

....

Oblivious to the tension in the air, Zhang Xuan frowned.

This Mo Yu is simply too unreliable. To think that her attention would waver at such a crucial timing.

It is a wonder how she became an apothecary.

Even though she was early by just half a breath, that half a breath was more than

sufficient to destroy the balance which he had sustained with great difficulty.

It caused a vast difference in the results.

Formidable apothecaries were capable of using their own strength to forcefully suppress the violent reaction between medicinal herbs. However, Mo Yu was only a 1-star apothecary, and her strength and capability didn't allow her to do so. Thus, Zhang Xuan could only ensure a balance among the various herbs to forge the pill. Yet, a mistake occurred, and if he didn't salvage the situation quickly, all of his previous hard work would go to vain.

"Calm your mind, don't panic and don't retreat!"

Seeing that the cauldron was on the verge of exploding, Mo Yu instinctively tried to retreat. With a darkened complexion, Zhang Xuan bellowed at her.

She mustn't back down at this point. The moment she leaves her spot, the medicinal properties in the cauldron would spiral out of control and an explosion would definitely occur.

"I...."

Mo Yu's face turned red.

"Why? Are you scared? If I knew earlier, I wouldn't have asked for your help. If only I had looked for another apprentice apothecary, such a situation wouldn't have occurred!" Zhang Xuan harrumphed coldly.

"You...." Mo Yu was enraged.

She was a proud and competitive person. That was also the reason why she was able to take on so many different occupations at once and achieve great accomplishments in them, thus becoming the genius in the eyes of others.

Initially, when she saw that the cauldron would explode at any time, she was hesitant to continue the pill forging. However, when she heard the other party say that looking for her to forge the pill for him was a mistake on his part and that even an apprentice would do better than her, her anger peaked.

If she were to back down now, wouldn't she be ridiculed by the other fellow later on?

Gritting her teeth, she forcefully held herself in place. "What do we do now?"

Seeing that his provocation had worked, Zhang Xuan instructed, "Throw the remaining White Sun Leaf and Turbid Solar Vine in together!"

"Throw all of them in?"

Mo Yu was taken aback. The energy was already running rampant, and if she were to throw in the remaining yang attribute medicinal herbs in, wouldn't that just cause the explosion to be even more violent?

Who in the world forges a pill like this....

At the very most, under the current situation, only the cauldron would be destroyed. If she were to throw these two herbs in, not only would the cauldron explode, the violent and searing heat from within would deal her a severe injury!

Could it be that this fellow is seeking vengeance....

"Hurry up!" Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up.

"Fine!"

Not expecting the other party to bellow at her, her face darkened. Gritting her teeth, she made up her resolution.

If I die from this, so be it!

At the very least, this is much better than being mocked by that fellow!

Agreeing to it, she flicked her wrist and threw the two remaining yang attribute medicinal herb into the cauldron.

Boom!

As she expected, the moment the two yang attribute medicinal herbs were thrown in, the cauldron began to shake even more violently.

Before, if it only looked as if the cauldron might explode, at this moment, everyone was hundred percent sure that it would explode.

This was because the cauldron was obviously nearing the limits of its durability. Cracks had started to appear on its walls.

"Everyone, back away...."

With a dignified expression, Hall Master Feng's zhenqi billowed and created a barrier before himself.

Knowing the danger of a cauldron explosion, everyone else also retreated hurriedly.

As though facing a dangerous enemy, all of them stood on their guards.

Geji, geji!

The cracks grew larger and larger, and the violent aura grew increasingly vigorous. It seemed that the cauldron was unable to take any further pressure.

"Add in the Green Toad Grass and the Crepe Myrtle Flower...."

Without the slightest panic, Zhang Xuan continued instructing.

Knowing that she had no other choice than to listen to the other party's words, Mo Yu swiftly grabbed the mediating medicinal herbs that Zhang Xuan spoke of and threw them in.

At this moment, all of the medicinal herbs required for the Searing Sun Pill had been fully thrown into the cauldron.

The addition of the herbs resulted in the cauldron rocking even more violently. The scorching heat waves caused even the air to distort. At this sight, everyone subconsciously wiped away the cold sweat on their forehead, and anxiety gripped their hearts.

"Raise the intensity of the fire by a single fold!" Zhang Xuan instructed.

"Raise the intensity of the fire?"

Mo Yu clenched her fists tightly together.

The cauldron was on the verge of exploding, yet Zhang Xuan ordered her to raise the

intensity of the fire. It was comparable to adding fuel to explosives!

Even so, having made up her mind, she decided to go through with it without care for the result. Zhenqi furiously surged from her palms into the flames.

Xiong xiong!

Triggered by Mo Yu's zhenqi, the flames grew by a single fold immediately. The searing flames embraced the entire cauldron.

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

The cauldron had been pushed to its limits by the violent reaction among the medicinal herbs, so how could it survive this abrupt rise in temperature? A series of cracking sounds echoed and a slight crack crept along the surface of the entire cauldron immediately....

"It's exploding!"

Someone exclaimed. The next moment, the cracked cauldron gave way. Boom! A powerful explosion occurred.

Strong heat waves gushed into the surroundings, and fragments of the originally sturdy cauldron flew in all directions.

"It's over...."

Mo Yu, who was still in the midst of infusing zhenqi into the cauldron, hadn't expected the explosion to come so suddenly. Caught off guard, she didn't even have the time to react when a powerful pressure came gushing straight toward her.

Amidst the intense outward pressure were cauldron fragments. If she were to be struck by any of it, despite her powerful cultivation, she would be severely injured.

"It's over. I'm really going to die because of that fellow...."

Mo Yu shuddered. Knowing that it was impossible for her to escape at this point, she drove her zhenqi to protect her vitals.

Hu!

She was thinking that she would be severely injured this time round when a figure suddenly appeared before her.

Boom boom boom!

The violent shock wave burst forth vigorously, but the figure before her didn't budge in the least. As though an immovable mountain, he took all of the impact himself.

"Zhang Xuan...."

At this point, she recognized the fellow to be the one whom she had resented all along.

At the moment of the explosion, he rushed to her front to shield her from the impact....

Her eyes reddened slightly.

Even though this fellow spoke words that sounded awful, he was warm-hearted within.

The trio, Zhu Jinhuan, Zhou Xuan, and Yun Tao, declared that they would do everything for her. Yet, at such a crucial period, they simply watched from the side. Instead, it was this foul-mouthed fellow who shielded her.

Hu!

Soon, the dust settled. At this moment, the towering cauldron had already been reduced to pieces after pieces of shattered metal. The coal within spilled onto the floor.

Zhang Xuan was standing right before the cauldron, shielding Mo Yu from the brunt of the explosion. His appearance was unkempt.... His clothes were tattered and his face was charred black.

"Are you alright?" Hall Master Feng and the others walked over.

"I'm okay!" Zhang Xuan smiled.

Possessing the Heaven's Path Golden Body and Heaven's Path zhenqi, his defensive capability was nowhere beneath that of steel. While the might of the explosion was incredible, he had only sustained superficial wounds.

"It's good that you're alright.... It's impossible to forge it, I'll send someone to Beixu Kingdom to render the service of Apothecary Wang Xing." Hall Master Feng consoled.

Wang Xing was the guild leader of Beixu Kingdom's Apothecary Guild and was a 2-star pinnacle apothecary.

Usually, it would be difficult for anyone to employ his services. But Hall Master Feng had some ties with him and furthermore, they were of equal standing, so it wouldn't be too hard to obtain his assistance.

"There's no need...."

Zhang Xuan shook his head. Just as he was about to explain the situation, Zhu Jinuang and Zhou Xuan hurried forward to help Mo Yu up. They had concerned looks on their faces.

"Mo Yu xiaojie, are you injured...."

Seeing them rush over, a disappointed expression flashed across Mo Yu's face. She quickly shook her head.

Zhang Xuan had taken the brunt of the impact from the cauldron explosion for her, so she didn't sustain any physical injuries. Rather, she was only alarmed by the force of the explosion.

"It's all this fellow's fault! What about guiding you to forge pills, he spoke as if he is so incredible. Yet, what happened in the end? Not only did the cauldron explode, Mo Yu xiaojie was almost injured! Are you sure that you can take responsibility if something happens to her?"

"Pill forging isn't a child's play, it's not like one can simply guide another. Do you really take yourself to be a master teacher? Even a master teacher wouldn't dare to claim that they would be able to guide a 1-star apothecary to forge a grade-2 pill. You should really learn some humility!"

Seeing how their goddess didn't say anything, the duo felt even more furious. They immediately turned to Zhang Xuan and began to criticize him.

"Shut up!"

She was already disappointed by the actions of the duo. Upon seeing them harping on this issue, she felt her anger escalate. Thus, her complexion darkened and she lashed out at them.

"Mo Yu xiaojie...."

The duo was just trying to speak up for her, so they didn't expect that they would agitate her further. They were about to explain themselves to their goddess when they saw her walk to Zhang Xuan with an apologetic look. "It's my fault that the pill forging failed. If it's possible, I can do it once more. This time, I promise you that my attention will not waver!"

"Don't worry about it!" Zhang Xuan casually waved.

"Thank you for standing in front of me and shielding me from the impact of the exploding cauldron. I've never had a man treat me this way before. I understand your intentions...." Seeing the casual look on the other party, Mo Yu felt even more guilty.

"Cough cough, wait a moment! You're mistaking something.... I wasn't shielding you from the impact of the exploding cauldron!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head. Stretching out his hand, a few round pills could be seen in his palm, "I was just collecting the freshly forged pills!"

Chapter 260

Half-Zhizun

"Freshly forged pills?"

Mo Yu was taken aback. With quivering lips, she asked, "Can it be that.... is the forging a success?"

Due to the explosion of the cauldron, everyone thought that it was a failure. However, Zhang Xuan carried in his hands round pills which exuded a powerful yang attribute aura. What else could those pills be other than the Searing Sun Pill?

"A success?"

"How is that possible?"

With Mo Yu's exclamation, everyone turned their attention to the pills in Zhang Xuan's hands and upon seeing the pills in his hands, turned dumbfounded one by one.

What is going on?

To think that.... pills were actually formed!

Zhu Jinhuang and Zhou Xuan's body stiffened, and they felt as though they had been slapped in their faces.

They had just criticized the other party for attempting something beyond his means, and in the next moment, he whipped out these pills....

Even the cauldron had been blown into smithereens, where could this stuff have come from?

If not for the fact that the pills had a lustrous appearance and were emanating heat, which screamed that they were freshly out of the cauldron, the crowd would have suspected if he had prepared these pills beforehand to play out this act.

"Didn't the cauldron explode? Your pills...."

Trembling, Zhu Jinhuang asked.

The others in the room also swiftly turned their heads over. Unable to believe the sight before them, they experienced fainting spells.

"Who says that it is impossible for pills to be successfully forged in the case of a cauldron explosion?" Zhang Xuan lifted his eyebrows.

"Is it possible for pills to be formed even with a cauldron explosion?"

Everyone felt faint.

It was common knowledge that a cauldron explosion was a sign of the failure of a pill forging process. Yet, this fellow broke all preconceptions. Despite the broken cauldron, the pill remained completely intact. What in the world happened?

"What is going on?"

Hall Master Feng couldn't help but ask.

As the hall master of the Beast Hall, he had come across by all sorts of bizarre happenings. Even so, he had never heard of such a thing.

"The cauldron merely acts as an intermediary for pill forging. The main factors that result in the formation of the pill are the flames and the medicinal herbs!"

Seeing that everyone's eyes were widened in disbelief, Zhang Xuan explained.

"Earlier, because Mo Yu xiaojie placed in a medicinal herb at the wrong timing, the medicinal properties within the cauldron clashed, resulting in the violent reaction. Even so, at the very last moment, right before the moment of the explosion, the rise in heat forced the pills to form successfully."

If the other party had followed his instructions strictly, she would surely have been able to successfully forge the Searing Sun Pill without any mishap. However, Mo Yu's attention wandered at a crucial moment, resulting in a mistake.

Even so, as long as Mo Yu continued forging the pill, the book in the Library of Heaven's

Path would continue to refresh itself. Thus, he chose not to give up, and instead, continued instructing to her, trying to avoid all mistakes in the process. Even though the cauldron eventually exploded, the pills were formed at the very last moment.

"The pills formed at the moment of explosion?"

"This...."

Everyone stared at one another in a frenzy.

The situation sounded even more incredulous after hearing the explanation.

How did you know that the pills had formed given that it was in the cauldron then?

Furthermore, to form them at the moment of explosion.... How much mastery does one need to possess over medicinal herbs in order to do this?

Just when everyone thought he was only skilled in beast taming, he stood out and showcased his medical knowledge; just when everyone thought that possessing some medical knowledge should be the real limit of his abilities, he ran forward and declared that he was an apothecary....

Fine, we'll accept that you are an apothecary. After all, while it's rare, it's not impossible for one to be skilled in multiple occupations. Yet.... You don't know how to forge pills.

Fine, we'll take that as well.

However.... Despite being unable to forge pills yourself, you are able to guide a 1-star apothecary to successfully forge a grade-2 pill. Furthermore, for the pill to be formed at the moment of the explosion.... This is inconceivable!

People often said that geniuses are eccentric. However.... Aren't you being too eccentric!

Each and every single time, you exceed all of our expectations and accomplish the unthinkable!

"Even though the cauldron exploded, because the pills were within the cauldron, they managed to survive the primary impact. However, if I didn't swiftly rush forward to

guard them, the shock wave from the explosion would still reduce the pills to powder. Thus, I rushed forward to grab the pills at the moment of the explosion. It is fortunate that I managed to make it in time!"

Zhang Xuan explained. Then, he turned to Mo Yu, and with an earnest look, he said, "The reason why I charged forward was really to save the pills. Because you were apothecary, when the pills form, they would definitely fly in your direction. Thus, standing before you was the ideal location to catch it. Please do not misunderstand, I really didn't mean to save you...."

"You...."

Seeing the other party explaining the situation to her earnestly, Mo Yu's face twitched. Rage surged through her trembling body, and she nearly exploded.

When she saw the other party charging forward to protect without care for his personal safety, she was incredibly moved. Yet, now with Zhang Xuan's words, the goodwill she held for him vanished without a single trace.

Damn it!

Can't you say anything good?

To have won the favor of a beautiful lady by mistake, even if it wasn't one's original intention to do so, one would usually accept it politely. Yet, Zhang Xuan was in a rush to deny the fact, as though it would blemish his reputation....

No matter what, she is a top beauty, and, not to mention, is the princess of a Tier 1 Kingdom.

To be in such a rush to deny the matter.... What do you mean by that?

Are you saying that I am not worthy of you? Or do you find my looks repulsive?

Mo Yu gritted her teeth angrily. If she didn't know that she wasn't a match for him, she would have long stepped forward in an attempt to give him a good bashing.

Taking a few deep breaths, she forcefully suppressed the anger within her heart. Then with tightly clenched jaws, she said, "I'm the princess of Tianwu Kingdom, and I won't owe anyone a favor. No matter what, you saved me. So, feel free to speak of anything

you want!"

"That's to say.... I'll receive a reward for saving you?" Zhang Xuan was stunned.

"That's right!" Mo Yu spat out.

"So that's the case!"

Putting on a serious expression, he said grandly, "Actually, it was because I noticed your precarious situation that I rushed forward despite the personal risks. As for the pill.... That was of secondary concern! Saving you was my greatest priority. Look, I've even sustained injuries on your behalf. Honestly, I won't mind if you pay me ten million or so. Otherwise, some pills for the wounds would do...."

"...." Mo Yu.

"...." Hall Master Feng and the others.

They've seen shameless people, but they've never seen such a shameless one.

Mo Yu was so infuriated that she nearly breathed her last.

After so much commotion, despite being a princess of a powerful country, the verdict was that her value was beneath that of gold and silver to the other party....

"What should we do now that the pill has been forged? Do we feed it directly to the Howling Firmament Beast?"

Hall Master Feng's mouth twitched. Seeing that Mo Yu was on the verge of tears, he quickly interjected and changed the topic to avoid the awkward situation.

He was afraid that if he allowed things to progress like that, this princess of a Tier 1 Kingdom would die from anger.

"Oh, dissolve it in water and force it down the Howling Firmament Beast using zhenqi."

Zhang Xuan passed forward a Searing Sun Pill over. Then, he kept the remaining two into his storage ring.

"Alright!"

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan's instructions, Hall Master Feng dissolved the pill in water anxiously and fed it to the unconscious Howling Firmament Beast.

Gugugu!

As the medicinal fluid entered the body of the Howling Firmament Beast, a sound reminiscent to the roar of lightning reverberated. Its body began to emanate a wave of heat, just like a pot of oil that has been set on fire.

Pi li pa la!

Soon, the noise of the cracking of bones sounded. The massive physique of the Howling Firmament Beast grew and expanded once more, and it became just like an insurmountable mountain.

Hu!

The massive savage beast opened its eyes abruptly and released a long howl. The clouds parted immediately, and its voice shook the entire valley.

Feeling its intimidating presence, all savage beasts fell silent immediately and trembled in fear.

"Is this.... Half-Zhizun?"

"He leapt straight from Zongshi realm to Half-Zhizun?"

Hall Master Feng's lips quivered in agitation. On the other hand, Beast Tamer Lu and the others widened their eyes in disbelief.

They knew that the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast would grow significantly stronger after undergoing the Bloodline Evolution, but they didn't think that it would be able to surpass Zongshi realm immediately to reach Half-Zhizun!

Zhizun realm was the highest realm of a fighter. The strength of a Zhizun realm expert was several folds greater than that of a Zongshi realm cultivator, and every single Zhizun expert stood at the very top of the pyramid.

As a Half-Zhizun, the Howling Firmament Beast had yet to take the final step into the realm. Even so, it wasn't far from it.

Even in Tier 1 Tianwu Kingdom, an expert of this level was considered as a national trump card!

With such a powerful savage beast in Xuanluo Mountain Range, the standing of the entire branch would rise exponentially.

"His words are right...."

Grandmaster Qing Yang's complexion paled, and he staggered a few steps back.

While the other party's words sounded logical, he had remained a little doubtful. However, upon witnessing the situation, the answer couldn't be any more clear to him.

The other party's conjecture was completely true. The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast had fallen into a coma due to the clash of differing attributes within its body. If they were to have really treated it using the method he had proposed, instead of making a breakthrough to Half-Zhizun, this powerful savage beast would have been dead by now.

As a 2-star physician, he had treated countless people. He didn't expect that he would make such a grievous mistake because of a savage beast. In an instant, he looked as though he had aged a decade, and the imposing aura from when he first arrived faded into thin air.

"For a fellow who hasn't reached twenty to be able to see through the root of the illness of the Howling Firmament Beast with a glance and guide a 1-star apothecary to forge a grade-2 pinnacle pill...."

Grandmaster Qing Yang's lips trembled uncontrollably as he turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

The more he looked at him, the more he found the situation unbelievable.

Putting him aside, even the famous Liu shi of Beiwu Kingdom wasn't capable of such a feat.

As long as such a person doesn't die, he would definitely become so well known in time, his name resounding throughout the world.

"Young lad, what's your name?"

Unable to hold himself back, he walked forward and asked.

"My name?" Zhang Xuan glanced at him. "I am an incompetent nobody!"

"Incompetent nobody?"

Grandmaster Qing Yang froze.

Previously, when the other party touched the Howling Firmament Beast, he insulted him as an 'incompetent nobody', and demanded for Hall Master Feng to chase him out.... To think that the other party would return those words to him now.

The Beast Hall specially invited him to treat the Howling Firmament Beast, but not only did he fail to do so, he nearly killed it. On the other hand, not only did the youngster who he called an incompetent nobody cure the beast of its illness, he even helped it break through and achieve Half-Zhizun....

At this moment, all Grandmaster Qing Yang could feel was a burning sensation on his face. Unable to remain here for a second longer, he said, "Hall Master Feng, Beast Tamer Lu, and Beast Tamer Wang, I'll be taking my leave!"

After saying so, not even getting onto the savage beast he arrived on, he left the Beast Hall.

This time, he had truly made a fool of himself. He felt too embarrassed to remain any further.

"This...."

Seeing how Zhang Xuan sent a grandmaster physician leaving in shame, everyone's mouth twitched.

This fellow may seem to be casual and light-hearted, but when someone steps on his toes, he becomes fearsome monster.

They wouldn't doubt it if someone said that he had killed a person with his words before!

"Beast Tamer Liu, go and send off Grandmaster Qing Yang!"

Hall Master Feng didn't expect Zhang Xuan to reply in such a manner. Smiling bitterly, he shook his head and made arrangements for the grandmaster physician.

In any case, Zhang Xuan was still young and, not to mention, he was capable. It was natural for him to retaliate when someone insulted him.

"Yes!" The elder rushed out immediately.

Even though Grandmaster Qing Yang had misdiagnosed the Howling Firmament Beast, it didn't mean that he was incompetent. On top of that, he specialized in treating humans rather than savage beasts. Furthermore, which physician could ensure that every single one of their diagnosis was accurate?

Even a 9-star physician would be unable to achieve that.

There are many different kind of bizarre illnesses in the world. No one would dare to claim that they've seen all of the illness there is in the world and that they can treat all kinds of sickness.

Huala!

Soon after Beast Tamer Lu left, the aura of the Howling Firmament Beast finally hit a ceiling and stopped rising. Turning around its gigantic head, its gaze fell on Zhang Xuan. Then with a roar, it walked to him, lowered its head, and rubbed it against him.

"Is this.... Voluntary Submission?"

Even though the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast was raised by the Beast Hall, it had never submitted to anyone.

Yet, at this instant, it actually took the initiative to submit to Zhang Xuan. The eyeballs of all beast tamers on the scene popped out immediately, and they were just a slight push away from fainting.

This was especially so for Hall Master Feng. His entire body trembled, and he was on the verge of tears.

He was just thinking that the Beast Hall could rise to greater heights with a Half-Zhizun savage beast backing it, yet this savage beast chose to submit to someone else. The moment it leaves with its owner.... Without a backing, how could the Beast Hall

rise?

"You wish to submit to me?"

Zhang Xuan was stunned for a moment before he realized the intentions of the Howling Firmament Beast.

Most likely, this fellow found out that it was Zhang Xuan who saved it after waking up and decided to acknowledge Zhang Xuan as its master out of gratitude.

"Alright!"

It just happened that Zhang Xuan was unsatisfied with the Viridescent Eagle's speed. Since the Howling Firmament Beast had reached Half-Zhizun, its speed should be sufficient to meet his expectations.

With a tap of his finger, a droplet of blood flew into the mouth of the Howling Firmament Beast.

The other party's intention to submit to him could be felt immediately.

It was exactly as Zhang Xuan had guessed. The Howling Firmament Beast found out that someone nearly castrated it, and that it was Zhang Xuan who saved its life and helped it achieve a breakthrough, that's why it chose to submit to him.

After choosing a master, it could communicate with its master if anything happens. At the very least, it wouldn't be put into such danger in the future.

"Un!"

Upon realizing these, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction.

On this trip to the Beast Hall, he had tamed three savage beasts and even became a 1-star beast tamer. This was a huge gain for Zhang Xuan.

"Ah, right! Hall Master Feng, how does the 2-star beast tamer examination go? I asked you this question previously, but you've only answered half of it and...."

Suddenly recalling a matter, Zhang Xuan could not help but ask.

Previously, after he inquired how the 2-star beast tamer examination worked, Grandmaster Qing Yang happened to arrive. Due to the urgent matter at hand, Hall Master Feng rushed off immediately, and the session ended abruptly. Since the issue had been settled, the Hall Master was free and Zhang Xian could clarify his doubts and decide whether he should take the 2-star examination.

Even though he already possessed this Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast, it would be a waste to allow this opportunity to take the 2-star beast tamer examination slip him by. Besides, there might come a time when he would need to borrow Zongshi realm Beast Mounts from other Beast Halls.

"For the 2-star beast tamer examination...."

Hall Master Feng shook his head, "There's no need for you to take it!"

"There's no need for me to take the examination?"

"Yes, that's because.... you've already passed the examination! You're already a 2-star beast tamer!"

Hall Master Feng flashed a bitter smile.

Chapter 261

Beast Taming Competition

"Passed the examination?" Zhang Xuan was perplexed by his answer. "When did I even.... take the examination?"

Before the other party could finish his explanation on the 2-star examination, the issue of the Howling Firmament Beast came up. Given how Zhang Xuan didn't even know what the 2-star beast tamer examination was about, how in the world did he.... suddenly pass the examination?

"The 2-star beast tamer examination is significantly easier than the 1-star examination. One just has to tame a Zongshi realm savage beast.... Given that the Howling Firmament Beast has submitted to you, you have already met the criteria for promotion!"

Beast Tamer Lu said.

"Ah.... It's that simple?" Zhang Xuan was dumbfounded.

He had to run about and undergo a Pill Discourse for the 1-star examination. He didn't expect the 2-star examination to be so easy and straightforward.

Upon hearing his words, everyone fell speechless.

Savage beasts who managed to reach Zongshi realm possessed their own pride and did not submit easily to humans. This could be clearly seen from how the Howling Firmament Beast had never submitted to anyone despite Hall Master Feng and the others having taken care of it for more than a decade.

Zhang Xuan only happened to earn its gratitude by treating it when it was in a dire state, thus prompting its submission. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for one to tame a Zongshi realm beast so easily under normal conditions.

"Beast Tamer Zhang, I'm afraid that your 2-star beast tamer emblem won't be ready by today. At the earliest, I can only deliver it to you tomorrow. Why don't you remain

here today? I also have something that I would like to discuss with you!"

Hall Master Feng smiled.

"This...." Zhang Xuan hesitated.

"The Howling Firmament Beast has reached Half-Zhizun, so its speed has increased tremendously. Even though the Red Lotus Ridge may be far, you can reach in two days. Besides, it's also getting dark, so it would be good for you to rest here for the night as well."

Hall Master Feng persuaded.

"Alright then!"

Lifting his head, Zhang Xuan realized that the sky had dimmed unknowingly while he was busy, and it was already nearing sunset. Thus, he nodded in agreement.

"Alright, Beast Tamer Zhang, this way."

Seeing the other party agree to the matter, Hall Master Feng was delighted. He immediately ushered him along.

"Let's go!" Zhang Xuan nodded and followed behind him.

Since the commotion had come to an end, the crowd gradually dispersed from the scene.

....

"Are you saying that.... not only did Beast Tamer Zhang treat the Howling Firmament Beast but also tamed it?"

"And he treated an illness which even Grandmaster Qing Yang is incapable of solving?"

"You must be joking with me, surely?"

"The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast has reached Half-Zhizun?"

The news spread across the Beast Hall swiftly. Upon hearing the news, everyone's first

reaction was disbelief. Shen Bi Ru, who was waiting outside, was completely dumbfounded.

She knew that Zhang laoshi had a tendency to cause an uproar wherever he went, but she didn't expect that he would cause such a huge commotion!

For him to see through an illness which even Grandmaster Qing Yang was unable to discern.... When did this fellow become so adept in the Way of Medicine?

Furthermore, he tamed the Howling Firmament Beast and became a 2-star beast tamer....

"I wonder if Han Qiong will believe me if I tell her about it...."

After confirming the news again and again with Yun Tao, a bitter smile appeared on Shen Bi Ru's face.

Her best friend, Han Qiong, had spent a great effort before she managed to become an apprentice beast tamer. It had been several years since then, and she had been unable to complete the final step to becoming an official beast tamer. On the other hand, this fellow's original intention was to borrow a Beast Mount at the Beast Hall....

Yet, not only did he become an official beast tamer, he even reached 2 stars.... More importantly, he even managed to take the prized treasure of the Beast Hall for himself....

If she were to tell Han Qiong about this matter, she might just go insane on the spot.

....

As a 2-star beast tamer, Zhang Xuan was entitled to numerous privileges. For one, he was immediately given a residence in the Beast Hall. Knowing that Shen Bi Ru had no lodging here, Zhang Xuan had her move in to settle down first. On the other hand, he followed behind Hall Master Feng to a large and wide lounge.

"Beast Tamer Zhang possesses outstanding talents, and not to mention, you are a master teacher apprentice. This thing will probably be of use!"

After they sat down, Hall Master Feng smiled and passed an object to Zhang Xuan.

Casually grabbing it, Zhang Xuan took a look and was astonished.

"Enlightenment Jade?"

The Enlightenment Jade was the item which Zhao Ya's father, City Lord Zhao Feng, gave him back then in Tianxuan Kingdom. It is useful for raising one's Soul Depth.

"That's right!" Hall Master Feng nodded his head.

Zhang Xuan stared at him doubtfully.

Despite the huge amount of jade that Baiyu City mined throughout the years, only a single Enlightenment Jade was found. This showed how rare and valuable the object was, yet this Hall Master Feng was giving it to him so casually....

"I only happened to obtain it by coincidence. As a beast tamer, this object is completely useless to me. On the other hand, you are a master teacher apprentice, and since you're going to take the master teacher examination eventually, there's a need for you to raise your Soul Depth. Rather than allowing this item to collect dust in my storage, I might as well give it to you."

Sensing Zhang Xuan's doubt, Hall Master Feng explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded his head. Just as he was about to speak, Beast Tamer Lu grinned, "I realized that Beast Tamer Zhang has reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle, and you aren't too far from Half-Zongshi. I happen to still have the cultivation technique manual that I practiced back then, as well as a notebook on the epiphanies I had, so I'll give them to you! Even though you already have an incredible teacher and probably don't lack these, please accept this token of sincerity on my part."

As he said so, he retrieved a few books and passed them over.

Zhang Xuan flipped through them, and they were indeed manuals and cultivation pointers for reaching Half-Zongshi.

"I am not as wealthy as the other two and do not have many prized possessions. All I own is this sword. It was crafted by Grandmaster Blacksmith Qing Yanzi of Tianwu Kingdom personally, and I'll give it to you now!"

Beast Tamer Wang stroked his beard with a smile and passed forward a sword.

"Wait a moment...."

Seeing the three smiling elders stuffing objects at him, Zhang Xuan stopped them hurriedly.

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

He didn't think that his reputation was so sound as to have three great 2-star beast tamers gift him with such treasures despite having just met.

"If there's anything on your mind, feel free to speak of it!"

"As expected of Beast Tamer Zhang, you sure are a frank person!" Hall Master Feng glanced at the other two before nodding. "Since that's the case, I'll get straight to the point. Actually, there's something that we require your help with."

"You require MY help?"

Zhang Xuan was stunned.

While Zhang Xuan had become a 2-star beast tamer, the same could be said of the other three. Besides, having served as leaders of the Beast Hall for many years, their connections far surpassed his. Zhang Xuan couldn't think of anything that might require his help.

Could it be....

"The Beast Pummeling Taming Method was created by my teacher. He has strictly instructed me to not impart it on to anyone, so...."

After digesting all of the books in the library of the Beast Hall, Zhang Xuan understood why everyone was so shocked by his feat of taming a savage beast by beating it up.

It was precisely due to the pure Heaven's Path zhenqi and the ability of the Library of Heaven's Path to peer into the flaws of savage beasts that he could easily tame them. Even if he wanted to impart it to them, they wouldn't be able to replicate his means. Furthermore, there was a risk that the existence of the Heaven's Path Divine Art might be revealed.

It was clear that these three elders had something to request of him given how they

were stuffing gifts toward him. However, there was no way that Zhang Xuan could teach them the Beast Pummeling Taming Art.

Thus, it was best for him to turn them down in advance.

In any case, teachers were highly respected in the world, and a teacher's words were absolute to his students. If Zhang Xuan's teacher instructed him to not impart the technique on to anyone, then he mustn't impart it regardless of the situation. Therefore by saying so, it would be hard for the three elders to persist on the issue. In a sense, it was the best excuse for the situation.

"Ah, every single beast tamer has their own secret technique. We won't ask for it if you are unwilling to impart it. However, our purpose isn't this!"

At this point, Hall Master Feng shook his head.

Just like how most established apothecaries have their own personal forging technique, most famous beast tamers also possess their own beast taming methods. On top of that, depending on one's disposition and cultivation technique, everyone has different beast taming methods that were compatible with them. Even if they were to learn the other party's means, it wasn't guaranteed that they would be able to replicate his accomplishments.

Rather than offending a rising beast tamer for an unlikely probability, they would rather not touch on the subject.

"It's not that?" Zhang Xuan was bewildered. "Can it be that.... you three have some incurable disease, and you all want me to treat you? Are you suffering from the same symptoms as the Howling Firmament Beast, being unable to sleep at night as well? If it's really that bad, you can try Grandmaster Qing Yang's treatment method...."

"Cough cough!"

Upon hearing those words, Hall Master Feng and the others choked on their saliva.

They felt a cold sensation in the lower half of their body.

What the heck are you thinking about?

We merely require your help! If we allow you to ramble on like this, we might really

end up as eunuchs....

"It's like that!" Afraid that they would lose their dignity if Zhang Xuan went on like that, Hall Master Feng hurriedly interjected. "Just like the Apothecary Guild, the Beast Hall has many branches as well. Since you're an official beast tamer, I probably won't have to explain too much."

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

After reading through the books in the library, Zhang Xuan had gained some understanding of the Beast Hall.

The Beast Hall wasn't just a singular entity. There were many branches just like the Xuanluo Mountain Range branch spread all over the world.

"Our Beast Hall is a Tier 2 Kingdom level branch, and we are under the jurisdiction of the Xuanyuan Kingdom Beast Hall."

There were many different tiers to the various branches as well.

The Xuanluo Mountain Range Beast Hall mainly dealt with the surrounding dozen or so Tier 2 Kingdoms, and it was considered as the lowest tier branch.

Xuanyuan Kingdom was the closest Conferred Kingdom in the area.

Kingdoms can be classified as Conferred, Tier 1, Tier 2, and unranked (Meaning, there's no master teacher backing the country, and that it is unqualified to be ranked).

Tianxuan Kingdom was an unranked kingdom. While Beiwu Kingdom, with 1-star master teachers holding reign in the kingdom, was a Tier 2 Kingdom.

Tianwu Kingdom, who had 2-star master teachers, was a Tier 1 Kingdom.

On the other hand, Xuanyuan Kingdom had 3-star master teachers, thus it was ranked as a Conferred Kingdom. As a Conferred Kingdom, it was qualified to build a gigantic transportation portal to trade with other countries. As such, this solidified its standing as a trading hub, and its national power was on the constant rise.

"The Xuanyuan Kingdom conducts a Beast Taming Competition once every five years, and it invites young beast tamers from the various subordinate beast halls to

participate."

Hall Master Feng explained.

"Since you officially became a beast tamer at our Xuanluo Mountain Range Beast Hall, you are considered as a member of our branch. I hope that.... you can attend the competition in the name of our Beast Hall."

"Beast Taming Competition?"

"That's right. This Beast Taming Competition brings the various talented beast tamers from surrounding kingdoms together, and if you can stand out from the group and emerge victoriously, you will be highly regarded by the Beast Hall, and all kinds of resources will be devoted into grooming you. At the same time, the reputation of our branch will also grow."

After saying so, Hall Master Feng looked at Zhang Xuan expectantly.

"This...."

Zhang Xuan didn't expect the request to be this. Glancing at Hall Master Feng, he asked, "When is the competition?"

If the competition was coming up soon, Zhang Xuan would reject them immediately.

His main priority at the moment was to deal with the deadly poison lingering in his body and take the master teacher examination.

The only reason why he took the beast tamer examination was for the fee exemption on using their Beast Mount.

"It will be held half a year later in Xuanyuan Royal City." Hall Master Feng said.

"Half a year later? That.... I'll have to see if I have the time then!" Zhang Xuan didn't dare to agree immediately.

He didn't want to make empty promises.

"Despite your young age, you have already reached the level of a 2-star beast tamer. On top of that, you're skilled in the Way of Medicine and are a master teacher

apprentice. If you were to join the competition, you will surely be able to achieve remarkable results...."

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was unmoved by his words, Hall Master Feng decided to throw in his trump card, "Furthermore, you'll be entitled to generous rewards if you win the competition!"

"The rewards aren't important. It's just that I might be busy during that period of time!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Rejected by the other party, Hall Master Feng and the others couldn't help but feel disappointed. However, before they could wallow in their disappointment for long, the other party's voice sounded once more.

"Ah, by the way.... what are the rewards?"

Chapter 262

Guiding Mo Yu

"The rewards of the competition differ every single time but it has always been very generous. More importantly, if you earn the acknowledgment of the Beast Hall, you might get an opportunity to study in higher tier kingdoms."

Hearing his question, Hall Master Feng hurriedly explained.

"In fact, the previous champion won the Tutelage Jade Token of a 3-star master teacher and a Flowing Water Beast Taming Method manual."

"You call this abundant?" Zhang Xuan was speechless.

He thought that the champion would obtain some incredible treasure, but a 3-star master teacher Tutelage Jade Token and a beast taming secret manual.... To him, these were useless.

"If I win the championship and don't want their rewards, can I swap it for something else?" After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan asked.

"It depends on what you want!" Hall Master Feng looked at him with a perplexed gaze.

Even to him, the Tutelage Jade Token of a 3-star master teacher was a priceless treasure. Was this fellow unsatisfied even with this much? Does he still wish for something even more valuable?

"Can I trade those for a few cultivation technique manuals instead?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Cultivation technique manuals? A few of them?"

Giant question marks hung on the faces of the three beast tamers.

Do you think that cultivation technique manuals are like cabbages in the market? Asking for.... a few of them at once?

Zhang Xuan nodded his head. "Un. Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals. It'll be better if there is more of them. In fact, if possible, I would like a thousand books."

"A thousand books?"

Everyone's body swayed.

They thought that Zhang Xuan's 'a few' would mean a dozen or so. Yet, a thousand books.... Are you trying to rob the entire Beast Hall of its wealth?

"What tier of cultivation technique are you looking at?" Hall Master Feng couldn't help but ask.

There were different tiers to cultivation techniques. The higher the tier, the more valuable it was. Finding even a single high-tier cultivation technique was difficult enough, needless to say, a thousand of it.

"Oh, I don't have any requirements on the tier, I'm fine with anything. All I require is a great quantity of Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals."

"This...."

Everyone was taken aback.

If Zhang Xuan has no requirements on the tier, then.... the cultivation technique manuals are truly inexpensive! While Zongshi realm secret manuals are valuable in Tier 1 and Tier 2 Kingdoms, they actually aren't worth much in Conferred Kingdoms.

As long as one had sufficient gold coins, he would be able to buy them easily.... This fellow actually wanted to trade a 3-star master teacher Tutelage Jade Token for this?

This was a huge waste of the treasure!

Even in Conferred Kingdoms, 3-star master teachers stood at the very top of the pyramid. Their lessons were something that countless cultivators dreamt about, and yet, Zhang Xuan wanted to swap such an object for a bunch of useless cultivation techniques?

Why does it feel like Zhang Xuan was picking the shell of a clam over the pearl within?

One must know that a cultivator can only practice one cultivation technique. If he wants to change his cultivation technique, he has to start from scratch.

They might be able to understand it if Zhang Xuan had asked for a powerful cultivation technique, but to have no demand on the quality.... He would only ruin his cultivation at this rate!

Upon realizing these facts, the three beast tamers stared at Zhang Xuan with strange gazes. This Beast Tamer Zhang's preferences.... were simply too eccentric!

"If you don't have any requirements on the tier, your request actually isn't that difficult to fulfill. They should approve of it.... However, the prerequisite is that you'll have to win the Beast Taming Competition first."

After hesitating for a moment, Hall Master Feng nodded his head.

There was a precedent of someone swapping the prize of the Beast Taming Competition for something else. As long as its value didn't exceed the prize by too much, and it was within their means, given that this would win them the goodwill of a talented beast tamer, the Beast Hall wouldn't object.

"Alright, I agree to your request!" Zhang Xuan replied.

As his cultivation realm rose, gathering cultivation techniques had been becoming increasingly difficult. It was just a matter of time before he would have to head to the Conferred Kingdoms, and having the backing of the Beast Hall would be for the best.

"That's great! We'll meet in Xuanyuan Royal City half a year from now then!"

Upon hearing Zhang Xuan agree, the eyes of the three beast tamers immediately lit up, and they clenched their fists in agitation.

Their Xuanluo Mountain Range Beast Hall had been at the very bottom of the competition every single time. Now with a talented beast tamer joining their ranks, they might be able to awe the other Beast Halls.

After resolving the issue regarding the Beast Taming Competition, they chatted for awhile longer. While they called it a chat, their actual purpose was to pry information from the other party. However, upon seeing that they were unable to get anything out of the other party's mouth, they decided to let the matter slip.

Whenever they reached a crucial point, that fellow would act ignorant. They were frustrated with his display but could do nothing about it.

If you say that you don't know about anything else, we can let it slip.

But as a senior to master teachers and a master teacher apprentice, you should at least know how the master teacher examination goes, right? Or at the very least, you should at least know how to raise one's Soul Depth, right?

In the end.... It turned out that he knew nothing about them!

Fine, we'll tolerate it!

But given how skilled you are in the Way of Medicine, you should at least know some basic medical knowledge, right? Yet.... How could you not know anything!

We'll tolerate that as well!

However.... You are already a 2-star beast tamer. How can you not even know how to ride an aerial savage beast and the various branches of the Beast Hall....

Alright, assuming that we tolerated that as well, what about when we asked you about how large the Beast Forest is, how many apprentice beast tamers there are in it, how many apprentices a beast tamer could accept....

Aren't you going too far with your act!

If you don't wish to tell us anything, you can just say so. Acting ignorant about everything....

Is that fun?

Previously, when you tamed a beast, treated the Howling Firmament Beast, forged pills, and slapped everyone's faces, it seemed as if there is nothing you are incapable of. Yet, at this moment, you are acting like a fool. Seeing you in such a state, some might even think that you have dissociative identity disorder....

After chatting for a short while longer, the three beast tamers couldn't stand Zhang Xuan any further and bade farewell hurriedly.

"Ah, don't go.... I still have a lot of things to talk to you about!" Zhang Xuan tried to stop them.

Hu!

Executing their battle techniques, the three figures blurred and disappeared without a trace immediately.

Whoever who wants to talk to him, feel free to do so. We do not want to die of frustration....

"In short chat, I learned quite a lot of things."

Oblivious to the thoughts of the trio, Zhang Xuan reflected as he stood up.

While Hall Master Feng and the others were just beast tamers, they had a good grasp of the powers and situation of the surrounding kingdoms. They were quite knowledgeable about the various occupations, and their words had expanded his horizon.

Even though this world wasn't as modernized as the one Zhang Xuan was in before his transcension, the knowledge which grew throughout the ages here was much more profound than that of his previous world.

It had just been barely twenty days since Zhang Xuan has transcended, and his line of thoughts had yet to fully adapt to this world. Thus, he was unclear of numerous matters, and speaking to these veterans was extremely helpful in expanding his outlook.

After the days of journey and the events that took place at the Beast Hall, Zhang Xuan had become slightly fatigued. Under the guidance of an apprentice, he headed to the residence assigned to him.

Upon reaching the residence he saw an elegant and beautiful figure, reminiscent of a painting, standing at the entrance.

"Mo Yu?"

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

It wasn't anyone else. It was the genius who had pitted herself against him for the entire day, the third princess of Tianwu Kingdom, Mo Yu.

"Beast Tamer Zhang!" Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, Mo Yu immediately walked forward to greet him.

"Xiaojie, were you waiting for me?" Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

It was already sunset by the time he was done treating the Howling Firmament Beast and after that, he chatted with the three beast tamers for around four hours. By modern standards, it was already around ten o'clock. Why would she be waiting at the entrance at such a timing?

"That's right. There is something which I am unable to comprehend no matter how much I ponder, so I came over personally to ask you about it." Mo Yu gritted her teeth.

"Oh?"

"How can you be so sure that the pills had already formed in the cauldron when the cauldron was on the verge exploding?"

Mo Yu stared at Zhang Xuan.

No matter how much she contemplated, she was unable to understand how he did it.

As an official apothecary, she knew very well how difficult it was for a pill to be formed. A split second error in the timing could spell the difference between success and failure. It would take incredible coincidence for a pill to be formed at the very moment of the cauldron explosion. Even though Mo Yu witnessed everything with her own eyes, she nevertheless found the matter hard to believe.

It felt surreal.

"It's luck!" Zhang Xuan casually said.

With the Library of Heaven's Path overseeing the situation, Zhang Xuan had a complete grasp of the timing of the cauldron explosion and the formation of the pill. However, he couldn't possibly reveal the truth, so he could only make up an excuse.

"Luck?" Mo Yu shook her head. "There's no such thing as luck in pill forging! I will be

truly grateful if Beast Tamer Zhang can enlighten me."

As a genius who dabbled in numerous occupation, Mo Yu possessed a strong desire for knowledge.

Initially, she didn't think much. However after returning, she tried recalling the matter, and to her surprise, she realized that the other party's understanding of medicinal herbs and control over flames were superior to even that of her teacher!

One must know that her teacher was a 2-star pinnacle grandmaster apothecary. Even in Tianwu Kingdom, he was an incredible existence.

A fellow who isn't even twenty being superior to her dignified teacher.... How is this possible?

Thus.... She concluded that Zhang Xuan had used trickery.

She contemplated over the various possibilities, but she realized that none of them could explain his feat. Thus, she made the trip here in hope that she could be enlightened.

"You wish to learn from me?"

Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that the other party would back off after a few nonsensical statements. Yet, to his astonishment, the other party continued to stare at him with an earnest look.

"Yes! I really wish to learn from you." Mo Yu looked at Zhang Xuan earnestly.

"Un!"

Satisfied with the other party's attitude, Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

Without the airs of a princess, she was willing to lower her head to seek enlightenment. With such humility and intense desire for knowledge, it was no wonder that she was able to master so many occupations.

"Since you wish to learn, I'll tell you more!"

Toward those who sincerely desired to learn, Zhang Xuan wasn't selfish with his

knowledge. Placing two hands behind his back, he spoke, "Pill forging is an art of melding medicinal herbs together to better bring out their medicinal properties. However, there are many factors that one has to consider in the process of doing so."

"If I'm not wrong, the cauldron that exploded then was forged using the Glacial Metal of the Glacial Metal Mountain at the northwest of Tianwu Kingdom. There were many processes to its forging, and the entire process took a total of forty-nine days. Even though it wasn't forged by an official blacksmith, it came from the hands of a famous 5-mo craftsman. After several refinements, it became exceptionally sturdy. However...."

At this point, his tone suddenly changed, "You've forged pills with this cauldron a total of eighteen times, and there were seven times when there were signs of cauldron explosion! Even though they were suppressed by using overwhelming energy eventually, the pressure had damaged the cauldron, creating numerous cracks in the interior of the cauldron. If that was just it, it wouldn't have been a big deal. However, if I'm not wrong, half a month ago, you forged an [Ice Soul Pill] using it. The clash between the lingering frost from back then and the heat from the forging of the Searing Sun Pill damaged the cauldron significantly."

"One should use their zhenqi to line the cauldron so as to prevent it from getting damaged. However, you didn't do so, and this caused several problems to appear with the cauldron. Even if it didn't explode this time, it is unlikely that it would last for long!"

"Now that we're done with the cauldron, let's talk about the environment where the pill forging was conducted. Given that it was an autumn evening, the surroundings were slightly chilly. When you first started the forging, you didn't warm the cauldron properly before raising the heat in your haste to show off your fire control mastery. Even though it did look flashy, it was equivalent to destroying one's own cauldron...."

At this point, Zhang Xuan lifted his head and smiled, "Mo Yu xiaojie, is what I've said.... true?"

"This...."

Trembling, Mo Yu's lower jaw fell to the ground.

Chapter 263

To the Poison Hall!

Mo Yu's cauldron was a gift from her teacher when she first passed the 1-star apothecary examination. Thinking about it, she had forged pills with it eighteen times, and of which, there were signs of cauldron explosion seven times. Each time, her teacher would help her suppress the violent energy within.

And she did forge an Ice Soul Pill a month ago.

The other party's words were completely true.

Being able to tell all of these just by looking at her cauldron? Mind-blowing!

Mo Yu felt her entire body shudder in disbelief. It was as if she was dreaming.

"Of course, these are just the fundamentals. They give one a gauge on when a cauldron can explode, but it isn't sufficient to determine when exactly it will explode, how strong the explosion will be, and how long the cauldron will last."

Seeing the other party remain silent, Zhang Xuan continued.

"To ascertain this, one's grasp over medicinal herbs must reach a certain level. The main ingredients of the Searing Sun Pill are the nine yang attribute medicinal herbs. Only by maintaining a delicate balance among the nine herbs and have them counteract one another can one prevent the energies from conflicting. Once the balance is broken, it would be difficult to salvage the situation. It would be equivalent to lighting a bomb."

"Previously, when you followed my instructions strictly to place the medicinal herbs in, there was no problem at all. However, on the seventeenth step, you placed the Rooted Grass half a breath early."

"The Solar Flame Wood in the eleventh step and the Golden Sun Flower in the fourteenth step counteracted one another. Given the conditions of the cauldron then, it required twelve breaths and seven breaths respectively for their essences to meld

with one another, and that was also the ideal and only timing to put in the next medicinal herb!"

"When you placed the Rooted Grass in, the two medicinal herbs had yet to meld together, and the yang attribute of both medicinal herbs were still in the midst of counteracting one another. Thus, it was as though you were lighting up a bomb, and a shock wave was induced. The strength of the shock wave wasn't sufficient to break the pills but it hastened the crumbling process. After which, when I had you throw in all of the other ingredients and increase the firepower, It was actually to deduce the impending impact, as well as the durability of the cauldron."

"Based on my calculations, I gauged that it was possible for the cauldron to last until the formation of the pill. Thus, I decided to have you continue forging." At this point, Zhang Xuan paused and looked at Mo Yu calmly. "Do you have any other questions?"

"I.... No, that's all!"

Mo Yu was unable to calm down from her shock.

She thought that it was some secret technique that had allowed the other party to accurately gauge the situation of the pill forging. But now, she realized that even though he had indeed used a technique, as she has deduced, it wasn't something she could learn.

There were too many factors contained within it for her to do the same.

Equipment, medicinal herb, forging technique, environment, and even the state of mind during forging.... She had to take all of that into account when doing her calculations. A single error could mean an entirely wrong answer.

A while ago, she was still thinking that she would work hard so as to quickly catch up with the other party in the field of pill forging. But at this moment, she realized that.... the difference between them was so great that they weren't even on the same track.

It was no wonder why the other party was able to pass the Pill Debate. Just his understanding of pill forging was sufficient to send her into despair.

"If you don't have any more questions, I'm going to rest!"

Seeing that he had managed baffle Mo Yu after much effort, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh

of relief.

In truth, he was unable to tell any of it as well. If not for the Library of Heaven's Path, not to mention him, even a 5-star apothecary would be unable to analyze the moment of pill formation and cauldron explosion just through those minor details.

At the very least, one has to be 6-star to be able to do so.

"Beast Tamer Zhang, wait a moment...."

Seeing that the other party was about to enter the residence, Mo Yu hurriedly shouted.

"I heard that you're heading to Tianwu Kingdom?"

"How did you know?"

The moment he asked the question, he realized that it must have been Yun Tao.

However, he didn't have the intention to hide this fact. Thus, he nodded, "I'm heading to the Red Lotus Ridge."

"The Red Lotus Ridge is quite a remote location, and rarely do anyone travel there. Can it be that you're looking for the.... Poison Hall?" Mo Yu asked.

The Xuanluo Mountain Range was lush and filled with countless savage beasts. In comparison, the Red Lotus Ridge seemed as though it had been razed by savage flames, and there was nothing there. There were practically no cultivators who would want to go there.

As a result, Legend has it there was a Poison Hall hidden in the depths of the mountains, and the poison masters there had laid lethal poison in the surroundings. Those who enter the depths of the Red Lotus Ridge would be afflicted with the poison and die swiftly.

No one knew for sure whether it was true or not because those who headed for the Poison Hall never returned. As time went by, it became one of the forbidden zones where no one dared to venture.

As such, it became a remote land which everyone avoided.

The reason why Zhang Xuan was heading there was probably because of that Poison Hall.

"You know of the Poison Hall?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

Zhang Xuan has only heard of the Poison Hall in the Red Lotus Ridge from Liu Shi and the rest, and they weren't sure of its existence as well. Thus, hearing the matter from Mo Yu, he became agitated immediately.

"It is said that there's a Poison Hall in Red Lotus Ridge. However.... no one knows of its specific location!" Mo Yu shook her head.

"It's fine as long as there is one there. I will find it eventually!" Zhang Xuan chuckled.

As long as there was truly a Poison Hall in the ridge, finding it wasn't a problem.

In the worst case scenario, Zhang Xuan would just try verifying the location of the Poison Hall using a map through the Library of Heaven's Path. Given its ability of discerning truth and false, even if Zhang Xuan wasn't able to pinpoint the exact location, he could at least avoid the wrong ones.

And the location which has no flaws would be the correct one.

"Speaking of which, the Red Lotus Ridge spans for several thousand kilometers. If you were to search every single acre of land, you would first die of exhaustion. Besides, there is lethal poison present in the surroundings of the Poison Hall. Even if you were to find the exact location, without someone to lead the way, it is impossible for you to enter."

At this point, Mo Yu paused for a moment and stared at Zhang Xuan with her beautiful eyes.

"If you wish to head for the Poison Hall, I can help you with the matter."

"You?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback. "You know of a way to enter the Poison Hall?"

"I don't know of a way, but I know of someone who does." Mo Yu chuckled mysteriously.

"Oh?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

He didn't expect Mo Yu to possess such connections. If she could bring him in, it would save him a lot of trouble.

"If you teach me how to forge pills, I'll bring you to that person. How is it?" Mo Yu stared at Zhang Xuan intently.

"Deal!" Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

"Then when do we head out?"

"Tomorrow morning. Right, do you have an aerial savage beast?" Zhang Xuan glanced at her.

The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast had achieved Half-Zhizun and possessed astonishing speed. If her aerial savage beast were unable to keep up, she would just slow him down.

"You!"

Hearing the other party's question, Mo Yu's eyes trembled. Gegege, the sound of her teeth crunched against one another could be heard, and her breathing hastened.

Are you intentionally rubbing salt on my wounds?

"Ah...."

Only upon seeing her expression did Zhang Xuan recall that she once had an aerial savage beast, just that.... it had betrayed her for him!

"Alright, how about you ride on the Howling Firmament Beast with me?"

The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast had a huge physique which was more than sufficient to ferry seven to eight people at once.

"Hmph!"

Only after hearing those words did Mo Yu's complexion improve. However, it didn't last for long.

"The Howling Firmament Beast is my tamed beast. If you wish to ride on it, you will

have to pay a fee. When it was still at Zongshi realm, a trip to Tianwu Kingdom would cost around 20 Beast Bloodstone. Now that it has reached Half-Zhizun, its speed has increased significantly.... I'll charge you double then. 40 Beast Bloodstone."

After calculating for a bit, Zhang Xuan said.

"Prepare the sum by tomorrow and pay in advance. Do not renege on the deal!"

There was information on the Beast Bloodstone within books in the Beast Hall.

Similar to gold coins, it was a common currency used by Beast Halls. The Beast Bloodstone was extremely useful in triggering a Bloodline Evolution in savage beasts.

While a cultivator absorbed spiritual energy from the air, a savage beast ate the Beast Bloodstone.

"...."

Mo Yu staggered.

Given how you are adept at so many occupations, do you have to be such a money-grubber?

"Hmph!"

Knowing that her blood would boil just talking to this fellow, she decided to leave before she could be angered to death.

However, after barely taking a few steps, the mutterings of the other party echoed behind her.

"Sigh, people nowadays sure are miserly. Despite saying that she is grateful to me, the moment I talk about money.... she turns silent. Now, she even expects to sit on my aerial savage beast for free.... If you don't have any money, you should say so earlier. You raised my expectations for nothing. To think that you are a princess, can a princess default on her payment?"

"You.... Zhang Xuan, you better explain yourself! Who doesn't have money...."

Mo Yu could no longer hold herself back and turned around abruptly. Just as she was

about to confront the fellow, he shook his head and entered the residence sighing.

"Damn it! Damn it! You stinky Zhang Xuan, darned Zhang Xuan, just you wait!"

Seeing him disappear into the residence, Mo Yu glared furiously at the mansion for a moment before stomping away with a puff.

Given how infuriated she was, it was unlikely she would be able to fall asleep tonight.

Feeling fatigued, Zhang Xuan went straight to bed after entering the residence.

The night passed silently.

Then the next morning, a 2-star beast tamer emblem was sent to the residence.

Keeping the emblem in his storage ring, Zhang Xuan made some arrangements.

Shen Bi Ru's purpose was to guide Zhang Xuan to the Beast Hall and would be returning to Tianxuan Royal City. Initially, he intended to give her a lift on the Viridescent Eagle, but she refused him adamantly. Thus, Zhang Xuan decided to give her the Gold Alloyed Panther instead.

Possessing the two great aerial savage beasts, the Viridescent Eagle and the Howling Firmament Beast, the Gold Alloyed Panther was of no help to him. Rather, it would be of a greater help to Shen Bi Ru.

At the very least, no one would dare to cause her trouble in Tianxuan Royal City.

In a sense, this was Zhang Xuan's way of repaying the other party for the care and concern she had shown him on the journey.

After making arrangements with Shen Bi Ru, Zhang Xuan headed to the courtyard of the Howling Firmament Beast. At this point, he realized that there was a room-like infrastructure built on its back. It was forged using metal, and it was streamlined to the body of the Howling Firmament Beast. This way, no matter how strong the wind was during the flight, it would not shake.

Most of those riding on Beast Mounts didn't possess powerful cultivation, and there was a risk of them falling when traveling at high speeds. As such, the Beast Hall prepared these rooms on aerial savage beasts to prevent such cases.

The Howling Firmament Beast had a large physique, and as though reflecting that, the infrastructure on its back was around six to seven meter wide. There were table, chairs, and beds in it, and it didn't feel as if one was soaring in the air.

Not to mention two people, even with the Viridescent Eagle inside, it wouldn't feel cramped in the least.

"Farewell!"

Zhang Xuan bided Hall Master Feng and the others farewell before walking into the room.

Huhu!

The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast's powerful wings flapped, and the two humans and two beasts soared into the air.

Gazing at the Beast Hall and Xuanluo Mountain Range which was growing smaller by the second, Zhang Xuan smiled.

Poison Hall, here I come.

Chapter 264

Heaven's Path Disguise Art

White clouds floated by and the wind whistled.

The Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast's massive body soared through the skies. Sensing the powerful aura of a Half-Zhizun, the other savage beasts immediately fled in fear.

In the housing on the savage beast's back, Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu were seated opposite to each other.

"There are so many savage beasts in the air. If not for the Howling Firmament Beast, even though our safety wouldn't have been a problem, we would still face quite some hassle with them."

Mo Yu said as she stared out of a window to observe the boundless sky.

Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

Through the books in the library, Zhang Xuan had gained some understanding on this matter.

The aerial space may seem peaceful like a safe haven, but in truth, it was actually no different from the world below. In the end, the strong still preyed on the weak.

If the savage beast one rode on wasn't strong enough, there was a probability of it being targeted and attacked by other savage beasts.

This was precisely the reason why the cost of savage beasts increased exponentially along with their cultivation realm.

As much as it was a matter of speed, it was also a matter of safety.

"To find the Poison Hall, we'll have to first head to Red Lotus City!"

After a night of rest, Mo Yu finally managed to suppress her anger and reverted back to the prideful and cold princess.

"Red Lotus City?"

"Right, it is an ancient city at the foot of the Red Lotus Ridge. One has to pass through the city in order to enter the mountains. The person whom I spoke of previously lives in the city." Mo Yu nodded.

"Is he a poison master?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"No, he's a herb king!" Mo Yu replied.

"Herb king?" Zhang Xuan was puzzled.

Regardless of whether it was for pill forging or to treat illnesses, there was great demand for medicinal herbs. Herb kings were people who had special connections to those who cultivated, purchased, and sold these medicinal herbs.

Given the sinister nature of the Poison Hall, why would a herb king have ties with it?

"This is a classified secret of the kingdom. I only happened to overhear people speaking of it."

Frowning, Mo Yu explained, "The Poison Hall is hidden in the depths of the mountains. Every year, countless people attempt to scale the mountain in hopes of learning the Way of Poison. However, most of them end up dying because of the poisonous mist. Rumor has it that the only way to find the Poison Hall is through the herb kings. The reason is that the Poison Hall requires intermediaries to purchase a large amount of medicinal herbs for the crafting of poison, as well as to sell their poison.... And the intermediaries are the herb kings! There is a total of thirteen herb kings in Red Lotus City, and the one that I'm bringing you to is the greatest of them all, the Great Herb King."

"The Great Herb King controls the flow of medicinal herbs in the Red Lotus City, and if anyone has connections to the Poison Hall, it must be him. However...."

Mo Yu hesitated for a moment before continuing, "I heard that the Great Herb King is already advanced in age and has gone into seclusion. It would be almost impossible for us to meet him and get him to bring us to the Poison Hall."

"Impossible? You said that you were going to bring me to the Poison Hall...." Zhang Xuan was speechless.

This person said that she would help me find the Poison Hall. Yet, it turns out that it would be impossible to meet with the Great Herb King and, not to mention, for him to bring me there. What kind of help is this?

"I only said that I will you to find that person. As for whether you can meet him and convince him, that's none of my business!"

Mo Yu said gleefully.

Aren't you always trying to anger me?

See how I'll get back at you!

"Ah, that seems to be the case!"

Recalling carefully, it was true that the other party only mentioned that she would bring him a person who knew the way to the Poison Hall. She had never said that she would bring him to the Poison Hall.

Zhang Xuan felt that he had been taken advantage of, having guided the other party in pill forging only to receive such a miserable amount of information in return.

All along, he had been the one to hoodwink others. To think that this fellow would get the better of him.

Even so, Zhang Xuan wasn't too bothered. Compared to his previous situation, at least he now had an idea of where he should begin to work from.

"Un?"

Mo Yu thought that the other party would panic upon hearing her words. In the end, he only said an 'Ah, that seems to be the case' and fell silent. Sneaking a peek at him, she saw a relaxed expression on the other party's face, as though none of it concerned him.

"Aren't you worried that the other party might refuse to meet you?" After a moment, Mo Yu couldn't hold back her curiosity anymore.

I said that the Great Herb King is advanced in age and doesn't meet anyone. Why isn't this fellow flustered at all?

"Of course I'm worried!" Zhang Xuan replied.

"Then, you...." Mo Yu blinked in surprise. Is this how you look when you're worried? I can't tell at all.

"But there's no use worrying about it. Rather than wasting my time, I might as well think about when you'll pay me my money...."

At this point, Zhang Xuan stared at her doubtfully, "Right, can it be that your identity as a princess is impersonated? Otherwise, how can you be so poor? Having not paid the fee, how can you be so thick-skinned as to ride on my Beast Mount?"

"...."

Mo Yu's slender body swayed violently.

She initially thought that she had finally won one over Zhang Xuan and would be able to admire the exasperated look on his face, but contrary to her expectations, he appeared completely calm. On the other hand, the moment he spoke, her rage soared once more.

Damn it!

I knew that nothing good can come out from this man's mouth....

Looks like I should avoid talking to him in the future. Otherwise, it would just be a matter of time before I die from his words....

"Hmph!"

Mo Yu ground her teeth together, but she didn't dare to say anything else. She decided to ignore the other party and pouted her mouth.

"Sigh, despite owing money, you refuse to let me speak about it. Why are people so thick-skinned these days?"

Muttering under his breath, Zhang Xuan stretched his back.

"You...."

Mo Yu felt a strong regret for following this fellow to Red Lotus City.

On seeing her beauty, everyone would always act carefully for fear of offending her. Yet, this fellow managed to push her buttons with every single word he said. It was as if he wouldn't be content until he gave her a heart attack.

How can there be such a fellow in the world?

She thought that she would die from anger in the two-day journey, but unexpectedly, the fellow didn't pay her any attention. Rather, he sat quietly in a corner of the room and remained in.... a daze.

"What is he up to?"

Initially, Mo Yu thought that the other party was intentionally putting on an act to vex her. However, his trance lasted for an entire day, and his eyes had reddened in fatigue. Deciding that it was unlikely for the other party to go such great lengths just to prank her, she became perplexed.

Speaking of provoking others, this fellow was capable of murdering with his words.

In terms of talents, even Mo Yu, a renowned genius, wasn't a match for him.

In terms of wisdom, he had been in a mindless daze. What was he up to?

Staring at the fellow before her, she realized that the more she knew about him, the less she comprehended.

Oblivious to the other party's confusion, Zhang Xuan was occupied inside the Library of Heaven's Path, fully engrossed in reading through the books.

Given that his awareness was immersed entirely within the library, it looked as if he was in a daze from the outside.

Zhang Xuan was able to access the books duplicated in the library with a single thought in his mind. However, while they were stored in the library, this knowledge didn't yet actually belong to him. He was still unable to utilize it freely under all situations.

Having transcended into this world for over twenty days, Zhang Xuan knew that he mustn't just rely on the Library of Heaven's Path if he wants to become a true master teacher. He has to read more books and learn more. Only with sufficient knowledge will he be able to reach greater heights.

While the golden book has the effect of assimilating the content within all of the books in the library into his very own knowledge, no one can tell when it would be formed. In any case, since Zhang Xuan didn't have Heaven's Path Divine Art for the Half-Zongshi realm to raise his cultivation and was free, he might as well read some more books and take in more knowledge. Perhaps, it might even turn out to be useful to him later on.

"Hm? To think that there would be so many books on disguising in the Tianxuan Kingdom's Book Collection Vault."

Sweeping through the innumerable books he had collected in the kingdom's Book Collection Vault, Zhang Xuan stopped before a particular bookshelf all of a sudden.

There were more than a thousand books placed on it and all of them were about altering one's appearance and disguise.

"I heard that when Emperor Shen Zhui was younger, he once roamed around the world. Could he have collected these books then? After all, as an emperor, there are too many people who wish to take his life. It would be much safer for him to don a disguise."

An idea popped into Zhang Xuan's mind.

Rumor has it that Emperor Shen Zhui once traveled around the world when he was younger to train himself and to widen his boundaries. However, if he were to have walked around in his original appearance, he would have probably been killed by his enemies back then.

After all, the allure of a throne is too great.

Even blood-related brothers would brutally slaughter one another for that one and only seat.

When Emperor Shen Zhui was traveling around the world, his cultivation had yet to mature. He probably collected these appearance altering and disguise books in

consideration for his safety.

"Since there are so many books here, I might be able to form a Heaven's Path secret manual!"

Thinking so, Zhang Xuan started to organize the correct content within the books. Soon, they melded together to form a single book.

"It worked!"

A delighted gleam flashed through Zhang Xuan's eyes.

"The art of disguise is centered around intent. Changing one's appearance with pills and suppressing one's voice is actually the most mediocre type of disguise. A true disguise requires one to have absolute control over their muscles...."

The book was filled with knowledge on disguising oneself.

After having flipped through a few pages, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but smile bitterly.

It was no wonder why Liu Ling and the others could tell that something was amiss when he was disguised as Yang Xuan. After reading through this book, he realized how subpar his disguise then was.

It was due to the lack of powerful experts in Tianxuan Kingdom that no one could see through his disguise.

Otherwise, even if it weren't Tianwu Kingdom, Zhang Xuan's disguise would have been exposed in any other Tier 2 Kingdoms.

Very quickly, he finished reading the entire book.

"Even though these are just the fundamentals to disguising, I should be able to hide my appearance from most people!"

Even though the books in Tianxuan Kingdom covered just the bare fundamentals of disguising, after mastering these, Zhang Xuan was nevertheless able to easily alter his appearance to the extent that even Liu Shi and the others would find it difficult to notice.

"This disguising method has a demanding requirement on one's control over their muscles as it works by moving muscles around to change one's appearance. It would be impossible for anyone else to cultivate this technique because being able to control every single muscle in their body is a nearly impossible. However, it's a different story for me! After cultivating the Heaven's Path Golden Body, the muscles in my body have gained immense flexibility and I am able to move them as I please."

Zhang Xuan smiled gently.

Just by reading through the Heaven's Path Disguise Art, Zhang Xuan had more or less mastered the skill.

At this moment, even without using pills for his disguise, Zhang Xuan was able to easily alter his appearance without anyone noticing anything amiss.

With this ability, even if Zhang Xuan was unable to defeat someone, he would be able to avoid him by altering his appearance.

This meant that Zhang Xuan had just gained another mean for survival.

"We've reached!"

Zhang Xuan was about to test out his disguising technique when Mo Yu's voice resounded.

Looking out of the windows, Zhang Xuan could see massive mountains appearing before his eyes.

The entire ridge extended for several thousand kilometers. The barren land was devoid of any greenery and its crimson surface was filled with sand and rocks.

"Is that the Red Lotus Ridge?"

The rise and fall of the geographical terrain extended toward the horizon, and one couldn't see the end with a single glance. It looked as though a massive red lotus had spread across the vast area of the earth.

It was no wonder why Mo Yu said that it would be impossible to locate the hall by casually fumbling around. Given the massive size of the ridge, it would be indeed difficult to discover an intentionally concealed Poison Hall.

"That's right. That over there is Red Lotus City!" Mo Yu pointed.

Following her finger, Zhang Xuan saw an ancient-looking city beneath the glow of the morning sun.

Chapter 265

The Great Herb King's Residence

Unlike Tianxuan Royal City, this city was built using red-colored bricks, and it blended in perfectly with the entire Red Lotus Ridge, looking extremely ancient. In terms of size, it was much smaller in size and could not be compared with the Beast Hall.

"The Red Lotus City is older than even Tianwu Kingdom. It is said that it has more than three thousand years of history, and is the trading hub of medicinal herbs for the dozen or so countries around Tianwu! However, due to the influence of the Poison Hall, no one is willing to remain here for long. As such, it had been on a decline, and now it doesn't match up to even those third-rate cities."

Mo Yu explained.

The Red Lotus City belonged to Tianwu Kingdom, and as the princess of Tianwu Kingdom, Mo Yu was well aware of its background.

"The Howling Firmament Beast and Viridescent Eagle are too conspicuous, and we might attract unwanted trouble if we enter like that. It would be best if we enter by foot."

Even though the Red Lotus City was merely a small city at the borders, it acted as a major trading hub for medicinal herbs and poison. As such, there was a large traffic of experts from surrounding kingdoms through the city gates. Given the humongous size of the Viridescent Eagle and the Howling Firmament Beast, entering just like that would bring unwanted attention to themselves.

In terms of strength, there were few who could defeat the Half-Zhizun Howling Firmament Beast. However, there was a possibility of poison masters hiding within the city, and attracting scrutiny to themselves might be perilous. While Zhang Xuan and the others didn't fear a straightforward assault, it would be hard for them to guard against sneak attacks that used poison.

"Alright!" Zhang Xuan replied. He got the Howling Firmament Beast to land somewhere a distance away from the city and instructed the two beasts not to stray

too far away before heading to the Red Lotus City together with Mo Yu.

Walking on the streets of the ancient city, surrounded by ancient buildings, it felt as though they had traveled into the past.

Despite the small city, there was quite a huge crowd on the streets. Lined along the long streets were vendors, and huge piles of medicinal herbs stacked up before them. There was a significant number of herbs which one usually couldn't find in any other market.

"Withering Earth Grass, Gossamer Cicada, Five Poison Silk Thread...."

Briefly glancing at the herbs, Zhang Xuan recognized quite a few of them and frowned.

These medicinal items contained lethal poison within them. They were rarely used in treatments and pill forging, and this was Zhang Xuan's first time seeing it sold in such great quantities.

"There must be poison masters here!"

Only poison masters would stock up on these items at great quantities. There was no need for ordinary apothecaries and physicians to store so much of them.

"There are poison masters here, but you won't be able to recognize any if he doesn't concoct poison before you!" Mo Yu said.

Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

Unlike master teachers, skills of a poison master are independent of his cultivation. Sometimes, a seemingly powerless child or a stumbling old lady is capable of concocting poison which even Zongshis are unable to withstand.

That's why it was hard to recognize poison masters. Even if a person with high cultivation realm were to purchase poisonous herbs, he may not necessarily be a poison master. On the other hand, an inconspicuous and fragile looking lady may just happen to be a famous assassin.

"If you wish to look for a poison master, you can sell medicinal herbs here. If you were to continue for three to five years, you might just meet with one." Mo Yu said. "There are plenty of people who are seeking vengeance but unable to raise their cultivation

waiting here for an opportunity to be accepted into the tutelage of a poison master. However, those who succeed are among the minority."

"Three to five years?" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

I might already be dead by then... why not kill me with a stab of the knife right now.

While the Library of Heaven's Path revealed a person's occupation, the requirement was that the other party had to first execute a battle technique. Otherwise, the person had to be unconscious.... If Zhang Xuan were to try to knock someone out here, endless trouble would surely ensue.

Others might think of him as a lunatic and chase him away.

"Let's first look for the Great Herb King!" Thinking of that, Zhang Xuan said.

"Indeed, the only clue we have at hand is the Great Herb King. However, have you ever wondered why everyone chose to sell medicinal herbs here despite being aware that the Great Herb King knows the location of the Poison Hall and is acquainted with poison masters?"

Mo Yu stared at Zhang Xuan.

"This...."

"The Great Herb King isn't someone anyone can meet easily!" Mo Yu shook her head.

"Even so, we should give it a try."

Zhang Xuan also knew that it wouldn't be easy. However, since he was already here, it wouldn't hurt to give it a try. Perhaps, the other party might just meet him.

"Alright then! However, I'll just say this first. The Great Herb King isn't someone anyone can offend. Even though your cultivation isn't weak, it's best for you to keep a low profile here. Otherwise, you won't even know how you died!" Mo Yu advised.

"Rest easy, I'm not a rash person!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

"Fine, follow me!" Seeing the other party agreeing to the matter, Mo Yu led the way.

She seemed to be well-acquainted with the roads here, as though she had been to this Red Lotus City. After around an hour, a massive manor appeared before them.

Red bricked with an emerald roof, green trees, and a beautiful stream, this manor which contained some modern elements in its design seemed out of place in this ancient city. Several guards stood proudly at the door, exuding an astonishingly powerful aura.

"Tongxuan realm?"

With a glance, Zhang Xuan's expression turned grim.

The guards at the entrance were all Tongxuan realm primary stage experts.

In Tianxuan Kingdom, experts of such level were capable of rattling the lands with a stomp. Yet, over here, they acted as mere guards.

"This is the manor of the Great Herb King!" Mo Yu whispered telepathically to Zhang Xuan.

Even without her explanation, Zhang Xuan had already arrived at that conclusion. Just as he was about to speak, a young gentleman approached the entrance with two retainers beside him and passed a name scroll forward.

"I am the prince of Tier 2 Baili Kingdom, Qing Yu. I'm here to seek an audience with the Great Herb King."

Tier 2 Baili Kingdom was a country of equivalent standing as Beiwu Kingdom. It was significantly larger and more powerful than Tianxuan Kingdom.

"I'm sorry, the old master had instructed us to turn away all guests." A guard spoke expressionlessly, blocking his way.

"Audacious! Our master is the prince of a Tier 2 Kingdom. How dare you obstruct his path?" A retainer behind the young man bellowed. Stepping forward, he roared, "Get out of the way!"

"In the Red Lotus City, our old master is the ultimate authority. Even if the emperor comes personally, we will turn him away, needless to say, a prince from a Tier 2 Kingdom! Scram, otherwise don't blame us for getting nasty."

The guards narrowed their eyes. With a swift movement, all of them drew their swords.

"You're courting death!"

Upon hearing those words, the retainer flew into a rage. He charged forward, aiming his palm straight at the guard's neck. A powerful wind blew into the surroundings.

"Tongxuan realm intermediate stage?"

The retainer was actually a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage expert! It was no wonder why he would act so arrogantly.

Hu!

At Tongxuan realm intermediate stage, one possesses 200 ding of strength. Before his hands could reach the guards, the compressed air as a result of his movements had already let out a piercing screech.

"Are you trying to barge into the Great Herb King's residence?"

The guard who spoke took a step back.

"So what if I'm trying to barge in?"

Prince Qing Yu's retainer harrumphed coldly. Not only did he not back down, he exerted even more strength into his palm.

"If that's the case, you can.... die now!"

Sensing the increasing vigor in the other party's movements, the guards and harrumphed and flicked their wrists.

Huala!

The retainer was covered in a white mist immediately.

"You...."

Before the retainer could react, the white mist came into contact with his skin. His

entire body convulsed, and soon afterward, white foam leaked out from his mouth. It wasn't long before he fell to the ground and his eyes rolled backward. Just like that, he met his end.

"What?"

Qing Yu and his remaining retainer were shocked by the sight before them. They hurriedly retreated in fear.

The retainer charged forward to attack was significantly stronger than the two of them, but yet, he died before he could even touch the other party. The poison they used was simply too vicious.

"Scram!"

After killing the retainer, the guards waved the two of them away.

This time, Yu Qing and his retainer didn't dare to say anything else. Carrying the corpse with them, they left in a hurry.

"This...."

All of these happened within a few breaths. Taking this scene into sight, Zhang Xuan's expression became grim.

The other party was a prince from a Tier 2 Kingdom, yet the guards poisoned his retainer without any hesitation....

This was something that Zhang Xuan never expected.

It was no wonder why Mo Yu treated this matter with grave importance. This Great Herb King was indeed a difficult and cruel figure.

"Are we unable to enter, even with your name scroll?" After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan asked.

No matter what, Mo Yu was the princess of Tianwu Kingdom after all. Her prestige should be much greater than a Tier 2 Kingdom prince.

"That's right." Knowing Zhang Xuan's thoughts, Mo Yu shook her head. "The Red Lotus

City may belong to Tianwu Kingdom in name, but it's actually a free zone. Even if a prince were here in person, he would be unable to interfere with the matter here, not to mention that I am a mere princess. Haven't you seen for yourself? Despite having his retainer killed before him, that prince didn't dare to say anything at all."

"Then.... Is it possible to sneak in?"

"Sneak in? That's even more impossible! Since the Great Herb King is able to become the sovereign of this city, there is no doubt that he possesses incredible means. If anyone can sneak in that easily, his manor would have been patronized by countless people."

Mo Yu said.

"That's true...."

Zhang Xuan nodded.

Given the Great Herb King's position as the most powerful man in the chaotic Red Lotus City, if anyone could sneak into his manor freely, he would have already died hundreds of times by now.

"Yet another person seeking death!"

"Do you think that it'll be that easy to enter the Great Herb King's manor?"

"It's said that only three types of people are allowed to enter the manor. Herb kings, poison masters, and those with an invitation letter! Otherwise, it's best not to loiter here, or you might die without knowing why!"

"That's right!"

....

Seeing the prince from a Tier 2 Kingdom sent running, hushed discussions arose in the surroundings.

"Invitation letter? Old uncle, do you mean that anyone with an invitation letter can enter?"

Hearing the discussion, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. He walked up to the group and passed forward a gold bill.

"That's right!"

Grabbing over the gold bill, the elder smiled and nodded.

"Then, how does one obtain an invitation letter?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"That I don't know...."

The elder shook his head. However, he seemed to have recalled something all of a sudden and added, "Oh, there's another type of person who can enter with an invitation letter."

"Oh?" Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu's attention was piqued.

"The Great Herb King is old, and his physical condition hasn't been well recently. He has been inviting physicians the last few days, and all official physicians with a physician emblem in their hands are allowed to enter the manor." The elder said.

"Physician?" Zhang Xuan looked at the elder. "Is there a Physician Guild here?"

Physicians, just like the many other occupations, have an organization behind them, and it is called the Physician Guild.

Due to Tianxuan Kingdom's remote location, it didn't have a Physician Guild. If there was one in the Red Lotus City, Zhang Xuan could try taking the physician examination.

"How can there be a Physician Guild here? All of them are physicians who are stopping by to purchase medicinal herbs." Pointing forward, he continued, "Look, that person over there should be a physician!"

Hearing his words, Zhang Xuan directed his gaze to the manor immediately. A middle-aged man was walking up to the entrance.

"I am 2-star Physician Nie Yuan from Beichen Kingdom. The Great Herb King has invited me."

As he said so, he produced an emblem and passed it to one of the guards.

"It's Physician Nie Yuan, this way please!"

Upon seeing the emblem, the guards bowed hurriedly and opened up a path for him.

"Thank you!"

Physician Nie Yuan walked into the manor.

Chapter 266

Physician Bai Chan

"That's right, I can do that!"

Seeing the physician entering unobstructed after flashing his physician emblem, a thought appeared in Zhang Xuan's mind.

"Let's go!"

Wasting no time at all, Zhang Xuan returned to the street where he came from with large strides.

"Do you intend to take the physician examination? I intend to take the examination as well, so we can go together. There is a Physician Guild in Tianwu Kingdom, and a roundabout trip should take a total of only five to six days. It won't take too much time."

Following behind him, Mo Yu asked.

To enter the Great Herb King's manor, one had to be a herb king, a poison master, or possess an invitation letter.... Those three were too difficult to achieve, and the best chance Zhang Xuan had was to earn a physician emblem.

Mo Yu was an apprentice physician, and she intended to take the physician examination after becoming an official beast tamer. Watching Zhang Xuan treat the Howling Firmament Beast had deepened her understanding of the occupation, and accompanied with the knowledge she had accumulated throughout the years, it wouldn't be difficult for her to pass the examination and become an official physician once they found a Physician Guild.

"Five to six days?" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "There's no need for it, I have another idea in mind!"

There were too many possible deviations that could occur if he were to spend five to six days obtaining a physician emblem at Tianwu Kingdom. What if the Great Herb

King was cured by another physician while he was away? What if the Great Herb King failed to hold on until Zhang Xuan's return? If so, he would have wasted his effort obtaining the physician emblem.

"Then what do we do? Do you want to gather medicinal herbs to become a herb king? However, the difficulty of achieving this is even higher, and you will suffer the oppression from other herb kings as well...."

Mo Yu was perplexed as to what Zhang Xuan was up to.

After the short commotion at the Great Herb King's manor, he should be aware that the Great Herb King don't meet with anyone except for the four types of people. Since Zhang Xuan does know where the Poison Hall is, it is impossible for him to become a poison master. On the other hand, if he has the invitation letter, he wouldn't have had to inquire Mo Yu about the matter. Therefore, the only solution is to become a herb king.... But this is even harder than earning a physician emblem.

Despite its three thousand years of history, there were only thirteen herb kings in the Red Lotus City. They had already established a stable distribution of power among themselves, and if Zhang Xuan were to barge into the industry abruptly, it was highly possible that they might just make attempts on his life.

"We're here!"

Instead of answering the other party's doubts, Zhang Xuan simply smiled mysteriously. After walking around for a bit, he stopped abruptly.

Mo Yu lifted her gaze. They were at a luxurious medicinal herb trading market. It wasn't as busy as the street they were previously at, and there were only a few people browsing through the herbs.

"Atrocious! Do you take me for a fool? For you to dare to use such subpar products to swindle me, is it because you've found a new buyer and don't want to work with me anymore?"

Walking along the trading market, a bellow could be heard from a vendor not far away from them.

It was a middle-aged man in his forties dressed in a light green robe. On his chest, there was a physician emblem gleaming beneath the sun.

"It's Physician Bai Chan!"

Mo Yu frowned.

"Do you know him?" Zhang Xuan glanced at Mo Yu.

"Un, he's a 1-star physician in Tianwu Kingdom. Greedy and lustful, he likes to take advantage of others. In fact, there's nothing good that can be said about his character. To think that I would meet him here." Mo Yu harrumphed.

"Since his reputation isn't good, that makes it much convenient for me!" Zhang Xuan smiled. "Let's go and take a look!"

Mo Yu nodded.

"Physician Bai, you are already an old customer of mine. No matter who I swindle, I can't possibly swindle you. This is already the best Green Bamboo Grass in my possession!"

Stepping forward, Zhang Xuan heard the negotiation between Physician Bai Chan and the vendor, "How about this, instead of five thousand, I will just charge you three thousand gold coins for each stalk. It'll just be thirty thousand for ten of them! This is already the lowest price I can offer you...."

"Thirty thousand? Twenty-five thousand and I'll take all of them!" Physician Bai Chan said impatiently.

"I will be making a loss at twenty-five thousand...." The vendor shook his head.

The duo was negotiating when Zhang Xuan approached with an agitated expression, "Physician Bai, what a coincidence! To think that you'll be here as well!"

"You are...."

Unable to recognize the foreign-looking face, Physician Bai Chan asked with a puzzled expression.

"I am an admirer of Physician Bai. I've long heard of your name, and I've been wanting to get to know you, but I wasn't able to find a chance. It must be fate that brought us together today!" Zhang Xuan said. "Boss, help me wrap these ten stalks of Green

Bamboo Grass up. Here is thirty thousand!"

Zhang Xuan gave three ten-thousand gold bills.

"Alright!"

Grabbing the gold bills, the vendor wrapped up the medicinal herbs immediately.

"Physician Bai, here you go!" Zhang Xuan passed the wrapped medicinal herbs to him.

"This...." Physician Bai was taken aback. Even though his words showed his embarrassment, his hands have, in actual fact, already grabbed hold of the gift, "How can I accept such a valuable gift from you when it's our first time meeting...."

"You're my idol, so it's only right for me to buy medicinal herbs for you."

Zhang Xuan smiled.

"What's this fellow up to?"

Following behind Zhang Xuan, Mo Yu was perplexed. How can it be possible for this miserly fellow to pay thirty thousand for someone else's medicinal herbs?

Isn't he is so money-minded and petty that he has to demand money from me every single day? Why is he being so generous now?

"Can it be that.... he wants Physician Bai to bring us into the Great Herb King's manor?"

Suddenly, a thought appeared in Mo Yu's mind.

Since the other party was fawning on Physician Bai instead of going for the examination, this was probably the intention he has in mind.

However, Zhang Xuan didn't understand Physician Bai Chan's character. She had heard numerous rumors about him back in Tianwu Kingdom. He was lustful, greedy, and incapable. It wasn't likely that he would even want to approach Great Herb King's manor.

After all, the Great Herb King's manor could be said to be a dangerous place. If he were to approach it despite not possessing the necessary capability, wouldn't he be courting

death?

"Since you insist, I will accept it humbly!"

Mo Yu was still trying to fathom Zhang Xuan's thoughts when Physician Bai Chan had already kept the medicinal herbs.

"It's nothing! It's my honor to be able to purchase medicinal herbs for my idol!" Zhang Xuan chuckled. "Is Physician Bai free? Since we've met, I would like to treat you to a drink, as well as to express my admiration for you."

"This...." Physician Bai Chan hesitated for a moment.

This fellow suddenly appeared from nowhere, paid his bill, and invited him to a drink. Even though Physician Bai Chan was greedy, he couldn't help but be suspicious of the other party's intentions.

"Oh, looks like Physician Bai is a little hesitant because you don't know me!"

Seemingly guessing the thoughts of the other party, Zhang Xuan smiled. He walked to Mo Yu and said, "You should know her, she is my friend. With her here, there is nothing for you to worry about."

"Princess Mo Yu?"

Physician Bai Chan was astonished to see Mo Yu.

Even though she was merely an apprentice physician, she was the third princess of the kingdom. Her status was way above that of a 1-star physician like him.

"Un!"

Mo Yu didn't expect Zhang Xuan to make use of her name. Even so, she complied with him and nodded.

"Oh, you are a friend of our princess! I should be the one treating you then...."

Seeing that the young man was a friend of the princess and, from the looks of it, that their relationship seemed to be close, Physician Bai Chan didn't dare to behave arrogantly. He agreed to the invitation hurriedly with a polite smile.

"It doesn't matter who's the one treating. Since fate has brought us together, we should have a good drink. Let's go!"

Zhang Xuan led the way with a smile. The trio swiftly left the trading market and arrived at an isolated street.

"Why would we come here? I know a good tavern that serves excellent wine...."

Upon reaching the alley, Physician Bai Chan put up his guard. Even so, after considering the fact that the princess was tagging along and it was unlikely for anything to happen to him, he continued to follow behind Zhang Xuan.

"We can have our fill of wine later on. Actually.... I have something that I would like to discuss with Physician Bai."

Zhang Xuan turned around.

"Oh, may I know what it is?" Physician Bai asked, bewildered by the situation.

"Actually, it's like that. I would like to borrow Physician Bai's emblem for awhile. Would you be so kind as to lend it to me?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"My emblem?" Physician Bai was taken aback. "How can I lend that to you! The emblem represents my identity as a physician, I can't lend it to others so easily...."

Before he could finish his words, the sight before him turned dark. A fist had already smashed into his face.

Pah!

It was an exceptionally crisp sound. Knocked unconscious, Physician Bai Chan collapsed to the floor.

"When I asked you for it courteously, you should have just lent it to me instead of yapping away!"

He stretched out his hand to retrieve the physician emblem from the other party.

"You.... What are you doing?"

Initially, Mo Yu thought that Zhang Xuan was going to have Physician Bai Chan lead them into the Great Herb King's manor. Yet, contrary to all her expectations, the other party knocked him out with a single fist. Mo Yu was completely dumbfounded.

"Oh, it's nothing much. I'm just borrowing his emblem to use!" Zhang Xuan explained.

"Borrow?" Mo Yu went into a frenzy. "This is equivalent to robbing an official physician! There'll be huge trouble once he reports this incident to the Physician Guild when he comes to...."

Every single occupation is protected by a guild of their own. If he were to file a report to the Physician Guild about how you swindled him, knocked him out, and stole his emblem, you'll definitely be in for deep trouble.

This is too reckless!

"Trouble? What kind of trouble? He doesn't know me anyway. I didn't tell him my name!" Zhang Xuan answered nonchalantly.

"Doesn't know you...." The moment she heard those words, Mo Yu nearly spurted blood. "He doesn't know you, but he knows me!"

"That's not a matter of mine. In any case, since you're a princess, you should be able to resolve the matter easily. If it really comes down to it...."

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment. "I'll overlook the money you owe me then. Besides, I spent thirty thousand gold coin to purchase medicinal herbs for him. In a way, I have already compensated him...."

"You...."

Mo Yu staggered. At this moment, she was on the verge of going on a rampage.

The heck!

Do you have to be so darned?

He might not know you, but you brought me out into the picture just now. Even if he is unable to find you, he'll look for me!

And to bring up the money that I owe you....

How much does riding a savage beast cost?

What you robbed is the emblem of an official physician, and you expect me to bear the consequences.... My reputation as a princess....

"Put down the emblem, let's find some other solutions.... Ah, what are you up to?"

Just as she was about to stop Zhang Xuan, the other party did something which frightened Mo Yu once more.

That fellow had squatted down and stripped Physician Bai Chan of his clothes.

Is stealing an emblem not enough for you? To think that you would take his clothes as well....

But what Mo Yu was more concerned about was that she had actually become his accomplice....

Mo Yu felt as if she would faint at any moment.

"Make some preparations. We'll be going to the Great Herb King's manor now!"

Couldn't be bothered to argue with the other party over this matter, Zhang Xuan took off his outer layer of clothing and, in its place, put on Physician Bai Chan's clothes.

"Are we going to the Great Herb King's manor just like that? Physician Bai Chan may not be famous, but his name is marked on the emblem. If any other physician were to be there, we'll be exposed in an instant...."

Mo Yu was still wondering what the other party has in mind. In the end, what Zhang Xuan intended to do was to impersonate Physician Bai Chan in order to sneak into the Great Herb King's manor.

This may have been possible for any other occupations, but the physician emblem was marked with the name of its owner. The circle of physicians wasn't too large in Tianwu Kingdom, so it was highly probable that Zhang Xuan would be exposed instantly.

"What exposed?"

Before Mo Yu could finish her words, Zhang Xuan was already done putting on the clothes, and he turned to look at her.

Seeing the face of the young man, Mo Yu was stunned for a moment. Then, her body trembled violently, and her eyes widened into circles.

"Physician Bai Chan.... No, that's not right. Is this.... the ability of a disguiser? How is this possible...."

Chapter 267

Butler Lu

All she saw was that Zhang Xuan appeared identical to Physician Bai Chan, who was lying on the floor. If Mo Yu hadn't seen him put on the other party's clothes, she would have suspected that Physician Bai had a twin brother.

She had heard of disguising from others. However, in her opinion, it was just a way of tricking the eye. As long as one was careful, he would definitely be able to see through any disguise. However, the sight before her shattered her understanding of disguises.

In the blink of an eye, Zhang Xuan had turned into another person. Furthermore, she couldn't discern any differences between the disguised Zhang Xuan and the real Physician Bai Chan.... How did this fellow manage to do it?

Can he really be a.... professional disguiser?

Legend has it that there is an extremely formidable job in the Middle Nine Paths known as disguiser. Even though it doesn't add to one's fighting prowess, it allows one to impersonate anyone that he comes across perfectly. It is the best method to escape from any pursuit.

However, the occupation had long disappeared in the annals of history. No one had seen a disguiser for a very long time. Mo Yu only happened to overhear it from the conversation of some elders. All along, she had thought that it was just a legend, but to think that.... it would be true!

Physician, beast tamer, apothecary, master teacher....

She thought that this was already his limit, but to think that he would be a disguiser as well!

Even when devoting an entire life to a single occupation, a normal cultivator may not even be able to master this one item. Yet, this fellow seemed to be capable of everything....

Does your family deal in occupations? Otherwise, how can you be so skilled in so many occupations when you aren't even twenty?

How is it possible for there to be such a monster in this world!

More importantly, if this fellow were just a monstrous genius, it wouldn't be anything.... But his talents were matched with his eccentric nature!

Initially, she thought that this fellow just had a provocative mouth. Not even in her dreams could she expect that his actions.... would be even more vicious!

In the Beast Hall, he stole a savage beast that she tamed with great difficulty. She thought that it was as bad as it could get. Yet, this time, he knocked out Physician Bai with a fist and left her to bear the consequences....

I am only here to offer help. Tell me, did I offend you?

With this blemish in my history, how can I take the physician examination in the future?

Upon thinking of this, Mo Yu felt an urge to enter a rampage.

"Let's go!"

Ignoring the conflicted Mo Yu, Zhang Xuan completed his preparations and, with big strides, began to head toward the Great Herb King's manor.

The Heaven's Path Disguise Art allowed him to alter the muscles and bones in his body as he pleased. Not only was his appearance identical to Physician Bai Chan, even his voice was remarkably similar. It was nearly impossible for anyone to tell that he was a fake.

This was precisely the reason why Zhang Xuan chose to impersonate a physician instead of taking the examination.

This way, he didn't have to worry about offending the Physician Guild.

On the other hand, given Mo Yu's status as a princess, wouldn't it be a joke if she were unable to resolve such a small issue?

Besides, his reason for impersonating him was to meet the Great Herb King and ask about the location of the Poison Hall. He wasn't committing any heinous crimes, so no harm was done.

"Damn it...."

Seeing the other party walk out of the alley, Mo Yu gritted her teeth and followed behind him.

Now that the other party had already dragged her down, it was too late for her to back out. She could only go along with him.

"It's easy to obtain a physician emblem, but as for treating Great Herb King.... Let's see what you'll do when you can't say a single word!"

There were physicians who specialized in treating humans, and there were those who specialized in treating beasts. Since this fellow was able to treat the Howling Firmament Beast with ease, it was likely that he belonged to the latter group. When it comes to humans, he might not be able to showcase the same level of expertise.

If you aren't able to treat the Great Herb King, there is no point meeting him.

Walking through the streets, it didn't take long before they reached the Great Herb King's manor once more.

As before, the entrance was protected by guards. Aware of the fact that the Great Herb King wouldn't meet with any guests, even though a huge crowd has gathered outside, no one dared to rush forward to offer their name scroll.

After tidying up his clothes, Zhang Xuan tried to recall Physician Bai Chan's walking habits. Then, while imitating it as closely as he could, he walked toward the entrance.

"Look, another person is courting death!"

"Hehe, there are already quite a few brazen fellows who have been beaten to death today. This fellow sure is gutsy to dare to approach the manor!"

"Let's just watch the show. I bet that he won't even know how he died!"

Seeing Zhang Xuan walk over, the crowd in the surroundings began to gloat over his

impending doom.

There were countless people who wished to visit the Great Herb King, and there was a reason why they had held themselves back. To head toward the entrance so leisurely, what else could he be doing if not seeking death?

"Halt!" Lifting his eyebrows, one of the guards blocked Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu's path.

"I am a physician!" Zhang Xuan whipped out his emblem.

"Physician?" The guard glanced at the emblem before shaking his head. "I'm sorry, the manor only allows the entry of physicians who are ranked 2-star and above!"

"2-star and above?" Zhang Xuan nearly spurted blood.

After hearing the elder say that all physicians could enter, Zhang Xuan immediately rushed off to look for an emblem. He didn't expect that there would be further conditions.

Even if he has the time, where in the world can he find a 2-star physician emblem?

1-star physicians were mostly Pixue realm and Tongxuan realm cultivators, so Zhang Xuan was able to deal with them easily. However, virtually all 2-star physicians were Zongshi realm experts. Even if Zhang Xuan intended to steal the emblem from them, there was no way he could succeed!

"Please leave!" Stepping forward, the guard gestured for them to leave.

Seeing the other party's actions and hearing his words, Mo Yu knew that it was a hopeless cause. Just as she was about to turn around and leave, Zhang Xuan placed both his hands behind his back and his eyebrows shot up.

"Audacious!"

With imposing might, he bellowed, "I, Bai Chan, am a 1-star physician, but who says that 1-star physicians are inadequate to cure illnesses?"

Mo Yu felt her sight turning dark.

You're right in saying that a 1-star physician can cure illnesses.... But even your 1-star

ranking is fake. Where in the world does your confidence come from?

Aren't your guts a little too inflated!

Didn't you see what happened to the prince's retainer? If things go wrong, you might very well die....

Mo Yu's heart beat furiously in anxiety. She was already regretting following this fellow here.

"It's true that a 1-star physician can cure illnesses, but...."

The guard didn't expect a mere 1-star physician to speak so confidently, and he was overwhelmed by the sudden turn of events. Just as he was about to continue speaking, the middle-aged man gestured grandly, and with a questioning tone, asked, "Did those 2-star and 3-star physicians who entered previously manage to cure your old master of his illness?"

"This...."

The guard was taken aback.

Quite a few 2-star and 3-star physicians have come and left the manor, but until now, not a single person was able to deduce their old master's affliction, needless to say, cure him of his illness.

"One's emblem isn't representative of one's medical standards. Are you certain that you can take responsibility for delaying your old master's treatment?"

Raising his eyebrows, he bellowed sternly, "Hurry up and get out of the way!"

"This...."

The several guards stared at one another. For a moment, they were unable to make up their minds.

While it was true that higher ranked physicians were more skilled, there were also rare experts who were unconcerned with the ranking of the Physician Guild.

If this fellow were truly capable and they obstructed his entry, none of them would be

able to withstand the rage of their old master.

However, their superior had given instructions that only physicians of 2-star and above were allowed to enter. As such, they felt conflicted.

"What's wrong?"

At this moment, a voice suddenly sounded, and a middle-aged man walked out.

"Butler Lu!" Upon seeing this middle-aged man, the guards immediately bowed.

"What's going on?"

The middle-aged man saw Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu standing a short distance from the manor's entrance, and the guards were blocking their way. A slight crease appeared on Butler Lu's forehead.

"This is Physician Bai Chan. He's a 1-star physician...." A guard quickly explained.

"A 1-star physician? Chase him out then!" Butler Lu waved his hands impatiently.

As the butler of the Great Herb King, he had met with numerous 2-star and 3-star physicians. As such, he didn't think highly of a mere 1-star physician.

"But he said that.... we won't be able to take responsibility if we delay the treatment of the old master. He seemed confident of treating the old master's illness...."

The guard spoke hesitantly.

"How arrogant!" Harrumphing coldly, Butler Lu turned to Zhang Xuan, his eyes filled with contempt. "Did you claim that you are capable of treating the old master? Not even 2-star and 3-star physicians dare to say such words, where in the world does your confidence come from?"

These guards may not know much about the old master's illness, but as the butler of the manor, he was well aware. Several 3-star physicians had seen him, but they were helpless at diagnosing the root of his illness. If so, what can a mere 1-star physician do?

"It's none of your business where my confidence comes from! If you don't believe my

words, we can make a bet!"

Zhang Xuan looked at him.

Butler Lu stared at Zhang Xuan with disdain, "What do you want to bet?"

"Whether I will be able to point out your illness through your punches!" Zhang Xuan said with his hands behind his back.

"What rubbish are you talking about? Butler Lu is still young and healthy, what kind of illnesses can he have?"

"It is clear that you are just an arrogant brat. I've met numerous 3-star physicians, and all of them make their diagnosis based on their examination of the patient. I've never heard of anyone who can diagnose someone just by observing his punches!"

"He is merely a boastful fellow, we should just chase him away!"

The guards roared furiously in unison.

Standing beside Zhang Xuan, Mo Yu felt her face heating up. She was just a step away from digging a hole and leaping into it.

Other physicians diagnosed patients through examining, smelling, and asking questions. It was unheard for one to examine someone through their punches.... Do you think that this is a circus act?

Initially, Mo Yu thought that Zhang Xuan possessed an in-depth understanding of the Way of Medicine given how he was able to treat the Howling Firmament Beast. But in the end....

Are you sure you are treating a human, not a savage beast?

Due to the inability of a savage beast to speak, physicians often require them to move about in order to determine the root of the illness. For you to ask Butler Lu to do the same as well, are you trying to ascertain whether he is a savage beast?

Besides, the one who is sick is the Great Herb King. Why are you trying to diagnose the butler....

"You...."

Butler Lu often came into contact with physicians, so he knew that such a situation only applied to savage beasts. Humiliated, his face grew beet-red. Just as he was about to criticize the other party, a blur flew across his eyes. A fist shot straight toward him.

"Audacious!"

A 1-star physician had actually dared to punch him at the entrance of the Great Herb King's manor! Butler Lu felt so angered that he was on the verge of exploding. His hands shot out immediately to counter the other party's fist.

"You're seeking death!"

"Impertinent fellow!"

The guards didn't expect Zhang Xuan to be so daring. They drew their weapons immediately and in an instant, a strong killing intent was released into the atmosphere. There were even some who had grabbed poisonous pills, prepared to throw them at any moment.

Hu!

Before Butler Lu's palm could come into contact with the other party's fist, the physician who assaulted him backed away abruptly. With a calm expression, he placed his hands behind his back, as though nothing had happened at all.

"Men, take him down!"

Butler Lu roared.

The Red Lotus City was the territory of the Great Herb King, and his prestige mustn't be sullied. Regardless of what the other party was up to, whether he was a 1-star or 2-star physician, even if he were the prince of the kingdom, for causing trouble at the manor of Great Herb King, it was the death penalty!

"Take me down?"

Zhang Xuan shook his head. Staring at the middle-aged man before him, he said, "If you feel that you can continue enduring the hyperventilations you suffer at night, I can

leave right now!"

"What did you say?"

Butler Lu froze at the other party's words. His face turned as pale as a sheet of paper.

Chapter 268

Entering the Courtyard

Ever since he met a problem in his cultivation three years ago, he had been suffering from hyperventilation every night. He would feel as if a person was strangling his neck, torturing him to the verge of death.

He had consulted physicians, but regardless of 2-star or 3-star physicians, they were unable to identify the cause. They had prescribed him several different medications, but none of them were effective.

He thought that he would have to suffer the torture of the illness for his entire life, up till he steps into his grave. Yet, the seemingly unimpressive 1-star physician before him was able to point out his condition with a single glance.

Can he, in actual fact, be an expert despite being just a 1-star physician?

"May I know how to address you?"

Stopping his guards, who were on the verge of charging up to the other party, Butler Lu suppressed his shock with great effort and bowed politely.

"Tianwu Kingdom's Bai Chan!"

Zhang Xuan replied impassively.

"So you're Physician Bai Chan! May I invite you in for a talk?"

Butler Lu didn't want the entire city to know about his hyperventilation issue.

"Of course!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

"Ah...."

Witnessing this sight, Mo Yu's pair of beautiful eyeballs nearly fell onto the ground.

No matter how slow she could be, it was obvious that Zhang Xuan's diagnosis of the other party's condition was correct. Otherwise, there was no reason for this Butler Lu's sudden change in attitude.

Without any questioning or a close-up examination, just by observing one punch, he was able to tell what the other party was suffering from....

To think that the method of diagnosing savage beasts would work on humans as well....

Why does the situation seem so incredulous?

Other people might have suspected the middle-aged physician of having looked into Butler Lu's condition beforehand, using it as a tool to enter the Great Herb King's manor. However, Mo Yu knew that Zhang Xuan hadn't even heard of the Great Herb King, so it was possible for him to know of this butler's condition.

The only possible explanation was that Zhang Xuan had diagnosed his condition on the spot.

To tame savage beasts through brute force, instructing her to forge a grade-2 pinnacle pill, diagnosing someone through observing their punches.... She already knew from long ago that this fellow wasn't ordinary, but wasn't this.... way too extraordinary?

"I should go over and take a look."

After a moment of shock, Mo Yu realized that the duo had already walked into the manor. She ran forward hurriedly in order to catch up with them.

Butler Lu had given the orders, so the guards didn't dare to block her way.

"Even though I don't know how that fellow managed to accurately diagnose Butler Lu's condition from just a punch, it would be futile if he isn't able to solve it!"

Mo Yu thought.

Red Lotus City was the greatest medicinal herb trading hub for the surrounding dozen or so kingdoms, and there were innumerable physicians who traveled in and out of it. Given the Great Herb King's esteemed position, if Butler Lu was injured, how could there not be any physician to treat him?

Since even 2-star and 3-star physicians were unable to cure his affliction, Mo Yu found it hard to believe that Zhang Xuan could cure him.

Mo Yu speculated as she walked into the courtyard. She was considering what she would do if Zhang Xuan failed to treat Butler Lu's illness when she caught sight of the duo who entered the manor before her.

With a single glance, Mo Yu staggered backward, nearly falling onto the floor.

At this moment, Butler Lu was standing respectfully before Zhang Xuan. As though a student, his eyes were filled with gratitude and admiration.

"This...."

Mo Yu rubbed her eyes, fearful that they were playing tricks on her.

She entered the manor mere moments after the duo, and Butler Lu was clearly infuriated with the two of them just seconds earlier. What in the world happened to cause such an abrupt change in the situation?

If it weren't because of the fact that there was no one lying on the floor, she would have even suspected that the fellow had knocked Butler Lu out and disguised as him.

Thus, she walked forward, wanting to ask Zhang Xuan about the matter. But at this moment, Zhang Xuan waved his hands and said impatiently, "Alright, bring me to the Great Herb King!"

Mo Yu staggered once more.

Impatient?

What the heck are you getting impatient about?

This is the Great Herb King's manor! To get impatient with his butler, are you that tired of living?

Mo Yu thought that Butler Lu would definitely be displeased with Zhang Xuan's attitude. Yet, contrary to her expectations, the latter bowed so politely that it was as if he was bowing to his parents. "Yes, this way, please. I will bring you to the Great Herb King now!"

Mo Yu swayed violently, feeling giddy all of a sudden.

What in the world is going on?

Even though he identified your illness, you need not behave in such a manner!

Accurately diagnosing an illness and curing it are two different manners! To act in such a manner before the other party has treated you, aren't you lacking backbone?

The situation was too strange for Mo Yu to accept. She walked over to Zhang Xuan's side immediately and communicated to him telepathically.

"What is going on? Why would Butler Lu act...."

"Oh, I've just solved his problem!"

Zhang Xuan replied telepathically.

"So-Solved?" Mo Yu froze. A sudden vertigo overwhelmed her.

In that single minute, he solved the other party's illness?

Are you joking with me?

"He wasn't really ill, he was merely poisoned. I helped him expel the poison, so naturally, he's grateful to me for that." Sensing the other party's doubt, Zhang Xuan explained.

The reason why Butler Lu suffered hyperventilation in the middle of the night wasn't a fault in his cultivation. Rather, someone has secretly poisoned him.

The poison was extremely strange. Even 3-star physicians would be unable to identify it, needless to say, treat it.

However, Zhang Xuan was different. Possessing the Heaven's Path zhenqi, he was able to expel such a poisonous aura from the butler's body easily. The duration of a few breaths was more than what he required.

"Poisoned? Expelled the poison?"

Even though Zhang Xuan made it sound as though it was a simple task, Mo Yu went into a frenzy over his words.

Expelling poison is way harder than treating just an illness!

Otherwise, poison masters wouldn't have been such a fearsome existence.

Besides, only official poison masters, who are well-versed in the properties of poison, are capable of expelling poisonous aura from a person's body.... Isn't it that you don't even know the location of the Poison Hall?

When did you learn how to expel poison?

Initially, Mo Yu had intended to return to Tianwu Kingdom right after bringing Zhang Xuan here. However, her curiosity toward this young man was growing by the moment. She felt impelled to follow him and witness personally what kind of unbelievable legends this fellow would continue to forge.

....

Oblivious to the thoughts flowing through Mo Yu's mind, Zhang Xuan examined the surroundings silently as he followed behind Butler Lu.

It was no wonder why the princess said that it was impossible to sneak in. Taking a good look at the interiors of the manor now, Zhang Xuan realized how true the other party's words were.

Putting aside the complicated layout within, the manor was packed with sentries. Most guards possessed a Pixue realm cultivation, and some of the commanders had even reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

Not just so, Zhang Xuan could also see several formation flags and formation core at the corners of the courtyard. If an intruder were to enter without knowing the position of the formation and stepped into one of them, it was highly likely that the person would be trapped for good.

And these guards and formations made up only the things that could be observed on the surface. Given the relationship between the Great Herb King and the Poison Hall, how could the defenses of the manor not include lethal poison?

Thus, despite Zhang Xuan's high cultivation, it was almost impossible for him to sneak into this manor.

With the butler leading the way, Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu didn't meet with any obstructions. Soon, they arrived at a vast hall.

Walking in, they saw more than ten middle-aged men and elders seated on chairs located by the sides. Each of them had donned an emblem on their chests.

With a single glance, Zhang Xuan felt astonished.

They were all physicians of at minimum 2-star, and three of them had even reached 3-star.

Even in a Tier 1 Kingdom, a 3-star physician could be considered to be a part of the highest echelon of the country. For three of them to be gathered here, the Great Herb King was indeed an impressive figure.

"Butler Lu, I thought that only physicians of 2-star and above are allowed to enter. Why did you bring a 1-star physician?"

Noticing Zhang Xuan, one of the 3-star physicians could not help but frown.

"Isn't this Physician Bai Chan? This isn't a place where you should be. Scram!"

Another physician recognized Zhang Xuan's disguised identity and harrumphed.

"Physician Mu Hong and Physician Cheng Feng, even though Physician Bai Chan is just a 1-star physician, his mastery in the Way of Medicine isn't mediocre. Thus, I specially invited him in." Seeing the contempt in the eyes of the two physicians, Butler Lu quickly explained.

"Did you say that his mastery in Medicine isn't mediocre? Butler Lu, you must be joking!"

The one who recognized Zhang Xuan, Physician Cheng Feng, sneered, "I've known him for over twenty years, do you think that I'm unaware of his standard?"

Even though Physician Bai Chan was merely a 1-star physician, due to his greedy and lustful nature, he had committed numerous atrocities, making him a notorious figure

in the Tianwu Kingdom's Physician Guild. At one particular point in time, he almost had his physician license revoked. If not for his absurd luck at that crucial moment, that 1-star emblem on his chest would have long been gone.

Yet, Butler Lu said that his mastery in the Way of Medicine isn't mediocre.... Even going to the extent of inviting him in....

"Butler Lu, you must have been mistaken!"

"I know this fellow as well, and he barely made it to qualify as a 1-star physician. How can his mastery in the Way of Medicine not be mediocre?"

"Do not be fooled by his flowery words...."

There were quite a few people within the group who had either heard of Physician Bai Chan or knew him personally, and all of them felt nothing but contempt toward him.

Despite being a 1-star physician, he didn't possess any true medical capability. In fact, he didn't even dare to treat anyone and made a living by trading medicinal herbs. When in the world did he become an expert?

"He...."

Hearing everyone's words, Butler Lu was stunned as well. Clearly, he hadn't expected this formidable physician who resolved his issue so easily to have such a poor reputation.

Just as he was about to speak up in Physician Bai Chan's stead, a 3-star physician in the group interjected.

"Alright, who the hell cares whether he is a 1-star or 2-star physician. If he fails to produce any results later, he will be ashamed to remain here, so let's not waste our words. Our purpose here is to treat the Great Herb King. Butler Lu, since so many of us are gathered here already, shouldn't you bring us to meet the Great Herb King already?"

"Yes, I will now invite the old master here for everyone to examine!"

Seeing that the crowd was no longer pursuing the matter, Butler Lu arranged for Zhang Xuan to sit by the side before nodding his head in agreement.

Chapter 269

Let Me Take a Look

Not long after Butler Lu's departure, an elder was carried in.

He looked significantly older than Shen Hong, and his skin was saturated with creases and age spots. Lying on a reclining chair, his breathing was faint, and it seemed that he would die at any moment now.

It was no wonder why the manor strictly rejected all guests except for physicians. Given the current state of the Great Herb King, it was unlikely that he would be able to hold on for long.

"You are all highly famous physicians of the Physician Guild. I beseech you to save the old master!"

Butler Lu bowed to the crowd.

"Tell us about the condition of the Great Herb King in detail!" The 3-star physician, who interjected previously, said.

"Yes!" Knowing that physicians needed to know about the medical history of the patient, Butler Lu answered without any hesitation. "The old master used to be extremely healthy until a disease abruptly struck him half a month ago. He found himself without appetite, and his physical condition deteriorated continuously, day by day, to the point that he is now unable to speak. As for the cause.... We've no idea as well. We only know that his physical condition is worsening by the moment and that no medicine he ate alleviated his condition."

"Ill all of a sudden? Can it be that he has been poisoned?" A physician asked.

Usually, when one becomes ill without any signs beforehand, it is highly likely that it is due to poison.

"We've taken into account that possibility and used a unique method to check, but there wasn't any sign of poison."

The Great Herb King had been reigning over the Red Lotus City for many years, and he had close ties with the Poison Hall. It shouldn't be a difficult task to check if he was poisoned.

Since they claimed that he wasn't poisoned, that was likely to be the case.

"Let me take a look!"

A 3-star physician approached the Great Herb King and examined him. A moment later, a deep crease appeared on his forehead.

"Lips are white, breathing is inconsistent, loose skin, deep age spots, spiritless eyes...." After taking a look, the physician shook his head. "These are signs that his lifespan is coming to an end!"

A person's lifespan is determined by fate, and if one has really come to the end of his lifespan, it is impossible for any physician, regardless of how capable they are, to offer any help.

Unless his cultivation reaches greater heights.

"While the title, Great Herb King, is well-known, it is actually a title that is passed on from one generation to the other. It has only been a few years since the old master had received the title, and he is currently only in his forties." Butler Lu hesitated for a moment before answering.

The Great Herb King of the Red Lotus City didn't refer specifically to anyone. Rather, it was like a noble conferment that could be passed on. Anyone who managed to become the Great Herb King would become the sovereign of the Red Lotus City.

"Still in his forties?"

The crowd was taken aback, and even Zhang Xuan was astounded.

No one would have doubted if Butler Lu said that the elder before them was in his nineties. Yet, for him to be in his forties....

At forty, a Zongshi realm expert should have been at the peak of his power. Regardless of strength, spirit, energy, or stamina, they should be at their best. It wasn't logical for his lifespan to reach its end at this age.

"Has he consumed the [Energy Rejuvenation Pill]?"

After hesitating for a moment, the 3-star physician asked.

Energy Rejuvenation Pill allows one's deteriorating physical condition to burst with strength once more. It is effective even on those who have reached the end of their lifespan.

"He has already consumed it, but.... it isn't effective!" Butler Lu shook his head.

"Even the Energy Rejuvenation Pill is useless?"

This time, the 3-star physician wasn't the only one to frown. All of the physicians had grim expressions on their faces.

The Energy Rejuvenation Pill was a grade-2 pill, and it had mystical effects on Zongshi realm experts.

Its ineffectiveness meant that the physical condition of the Great Herb King had deteriorated to an unimaginable level.

"I know a set of acupuncture routine that can stimulate one's acupoints and recover their stamina. I can give it a try!"

Saying so, Physician Mu Hong stood up.

"I've heard of Physician Mu Hong's impressive acupuncture. It should be effective." The crowd nodded.

Without wasting any time, he retrieved his silver needles immediately and pierced them into the acupoints of the horizontally lying Great Herb King.

A moment later.

Shaking his head, Physician Mu Hong walked back.

His impressive acupuncture was renowned, but it was completely ineffective on the Great Herb King.

"I have the formula for a mystical medicine here, I can give it a try..."

Someone else stood up.

Just like that, the physicians tried all of their specialties while discussing the condition of the Great Herb King. The various means and theories they raised left Mo Yu electrified.

Those who were present were the most incredible grandmaster physicians within their country, and even the worst of the lot here was much more skilled than Grandmaster Qing Yang. As a mere apprentice physician, she had never experienced such a majestic gathering. She benefitted greatly from their conversation, and her knowledge in the Way of Medicine deepened significantly.

"He...."

Suppressing the agitation in her heart, she turned to Zhang Xuan and with a glance, her expression darkened.

She thought that the fellow would, like her, immerse himself in the profound theories that were spoken here. Yet, he was sitting blankly on the spot.

She was familiar with this expression. This was the confused look of an amateur who couldn't understand a single word.

Do you not understand what they are saying?

How is this possible?

Unable to believe her eyes, she sent a telepathic message to him. "Zhang Xuan, I don't understand the [Extreme Treatment Method] that Physician Mu Hong spoke of. What does it mean?"

Taken aback by her sudden question, Zhang Xuan was stunned.

He hadn't browsed through much books on the Way of Medicine, so how could he know of these theories and terms?

He pondered for a moment before shaking his head, "I don't know either. I've never heard of it."

Mo Yu's vision turned gray.

Extreme Treatment Method was a diagnosis method that assumed the worst situation to determine the root of an illness. Needless to say physicians, even apprentices would have known it. Yet, this fellow said that he has never heard of it....

"Then.... What about Observation Diagnosis Method?"

She asked once more.

"I've never heard of it either!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

There was only one 1-star physician in Tianxuan Kingdom, and he was Master Yuanyu. Zhang Xuan had never conversed with him about the Way of Medicine, so it wasn't wrong to say that he didn't know a single thing about medical theories.

The corners of Mo Yu's mouth twitched violently.

Observation Diagnosis Method referred to the standard steps of determining an illness through observation of the patient. This was one of the topics that would surely be tested for the apprentice physician examination, and it wasn't possible for any single physician to not know of it. Yet, he said that he hasn't heard of it....

To not even know the basics of the Way of Medicine and still dare to pass off as a physician to treat the Great Herb King....

Brother, are you that sick of living, or are you that bored?

Mo Yu felt a stifling sensation in her chest. At the same time, she was also baffled.

Zhang Xuan isn't acquainted with the fundamentals of the Way of Medicine.... but how was he able to diagnose the illness of the Howling Firmament Beast and Butler Lu accurately, and treat them?

While Mo Yu's thoughts were wandered, Zhang Xuan looked at the Great Herb King helplessly.

The Library of Heaven's Path could only compile a book when one executed a battle technique or when one was unconscious. Even though the Great Herb King was unable to speak a word, he was conscious.

His current situation was not much better than Shen Hong's back then, and if Zhang

Xuan were to ask him to execute a battle technique for him.... He would probably die before he could lift his fist.

On the other hand, if he were to reenact what he did with Shen Hong and knock the Great Herb King unconscious with a slap.... It was highly likely that he would be cut into innumerable pieces before he could even read the contents of the book compiled.

Although this lounge seemed quiet, there were numerous experts lurking in the shadows.

If he were to make a move on the Great Herb King, these people would definitely charge out immediately.

"I must think of a way to knock this Great Herb King out open and aboveboard...."

Rubbing his glabella, Zhang Xuan scrambled to find an excuse.

"I'm truly sorry. This is my first time seeing an illness like the Great Herb King's, and I am helpless before it!"

"Indeed, Butler Lu. We can't find any other possible solutions, sorry."

"My skills are still lacking...."

Mo Yu and Zhang Xuan were still deep in contemplation when Mu Hong and the others stood up and shook their heads in embarrassment.

In the end, they weren't even able to determine the illness of the other party, needless to say, treat him.

"This...."

Looking at their expressions, Butler Lu couldn't help but reveal his disappointment.

Many physicians have come to and fro ever since the old master fell ill, and this wasn't his first time hearing such answers.

"Even though you weren't able to treat the old master, we're still grateful. The Great Herb King Manor will not allow all of you to make this trip for nothing...."

Shaking his head, Butler Lu was in the midst of addressing others when Physician Cheng Feng glanced at Zhang Xuan with a contemptuous gaze.

"Butler Lu, we have tried to diagnose the Great Herb King and discussed the matter, but if I'm not mistaken, this Physician Bai Chan whom you invited over has been sitting in the same spot throughout the whole time. Is it because he looks down on us, and does not think that we're worthy of his words? Or is it because he has an idea in mind and he doesn't want to discuss it with us?"

Hearing Physician Cheng Feng words, everyone was taken aback. At the same time, they recalled that the fellow named Bai Chan didn't seem to have spoken a single word throughout the entire diagnosis, as though a mute.

"This fellow has been seated the entire time!"

"Not just that, he didn't even say a single word."

"He's a mere 1-star physician, it would be weird if he could contribute to our discussions."

"It's because he knows that his skills are lacking that he chose not to speak. At the very least, he has avoided being mocked because of his words."

Recalling that the other party was just a 1-star physician, disdain flashed through their eyes.

A 1-star physician would be a respected figure anywhere else, just not here.

Given how even 3-star physicians didn't comprehend the illness, what could a 1-star physician possibly understand?

It was wise of him to choose to keep mum.

"It shouldn't be put like that. Since Butler Lu has specially invited him over and praised his mastery in the Way of Medicine, how can he possibly be afraid to speak up?" Physician Cheng Feng flashed a contemptuous smile at Zhang Xuan.

He was well aware of this Physician Bai Chan's standards.

He felt envious of the fact that Butler Lu had invited him personally and praised him

in public. This was a treatment which even he didn't receive. Now that there was an opportunity to shame him, he found it a waste to let it slip by.

"This...."

Butler Lu hesitated for a moment before turning to Zhang Xuan, "Physician Bai Chan...."

Since this Physician Bai was able to determine his illness with a glance, Butler Lu was confident in his medical skills. However, the other party hadn't spoken a word from the start to the end, and this had left him perplexed.

Only upon hearing Butler Lu call him did Zhang Xuan snap back to reality. With a puzzled look, he asked, "What's wrong?"

"The matter is like this!"

Butler Lu coughed, embarrassed by the fact that the fellow blanked out while the others were examining the old master. Then, he explained, "The other physicians were unable to determine the root of the old master's illness, and they would like to hear your opinion."

"They failed to even determine the root of the illness?"

Standing up, Zhang Xuan glanced at the crowd before shaking his head.

"Since they are unable to make it, I'll give it a try!"

Chapter 270

Zhang Xuan's Secret Art

"Atrocious!"

"Who did you say is unable to make it?"

"Being a mere 1-star physician.... how dare you speak such arrogant words!"

The crowd burst into an uproar immediately.

What do you mean by we are unable to make it and that you'll give it a try.... Do you mean that you are more skilled than us?

Despite being a measly 1-star physician, how can you be so confident?

"What arrogant words. Bai Chan, you sure became capable in just a few days!"

Even Physician Cheng Feng hadn't expected him to say such words. He narrowed his eyes angrily at Zhang Xuan.

"Ignorant lad, how dare you utter such conceited words. I would like to see what you are capable of then!" Physician Mu Hong flung his sleeves in displeasure.

Even we 2-star and 3-star physicians aren't able to determine the root of the illness and treat it, so what is a 1-star physician like you bragging for?

Give it a try? Do you even understand what is going on?

"This fellow...."

Mo Yu rolled her eyes.

Even the 3-star physicians present weren't able to make sense of the Great Herb King's condition. Yet, you, who don't even know what Extreme Diagnosis Method and Observation Diagnosis Method are, dare to declare that you would give it a try,

disregarding everyone else....

Aren't you afraid of getting beaten to death?

Where does your confidence come from?

Ignoring their furious and doubtful gazes, Zhang Xuan walked up to the Great Herb King.

He didn't notice it from afar but upon walking closer, Zhang Xuan realized that the Great Herb King's condition was indeed critical. His flesh was hanging loosely off his body, his skin was incredibly dry, and the life in his eyes seemed to be flickering as if it would extinguish at any moment.

Circling around the other party, Zhang Xuan touched and examined him meticulously....

As expected....

He wasn't able to discern anything at all!

"Physician Bai, are there any results from your observation?"

Seeing the other party deep in contemplation, Butler Lu couldn't help but ask.

The others paid close attention as well.

The man had acted arrogantly, and they wanted to see if he did have the capabilities to back his words.

"Un, I've noticed a few things. However, I'm not very sure!"

If Zhang Xuan were to say that he was unable to discern anything, he would surely be beaten to death on the spot. Thus, after a moment of silence, Zhang Xuan replied.

"You noticed a few things? Really?" Hearing Zhang Xuan's reply, Butler Lu was thrilled.

The other party was able to tell that he was suffering from asthma with just a glance, so perhaps, he might be able to do what others were unable to accomplish.

"Hmph, putting on an act!"

"I would like to see what you have managed to find out!"

The other physicians responded disdainfully to Zhang Xuan's words.

There were particular methods and steps to examine a patient's condition, and all the fellow did was to circle around the patient. He had disregarded the most important aspects, yet he arrogantly declared that he noticed a few things....

Are you dreaming?

Feel free to brag all you want, let's see what you can do later on!

"Don't be in such a hurry. Even though I now have a rough idea about the problem, I should confirm his condition before starting the treatment!"

Ignoring the disdainful gazes of the crowd, Zhang Xuan shook his head and paused for a moment. "I do have a secret art which would allow me to easily ascertain the root of the illness. However...."

At this point, Zhang Xuan paused, and hesitation hung on his face.

"However?"

Hearing that there was a secret art which could ascertain the root of the illness, Butler Lu became agitated immediately. Even the corpse-like Great Herb King rolled his eyeball over as well.

The greatest problem they were facing wasn't the treatment. Rather... they didn't even know what the condition was. If they could ascertain his illness, they might be able to search through the books and look for a solution.

"Just that.... the Great Herb King might have to suffer for a little!"

Zhang Xuan slowly spoke.

"As long as you can ascertain the illness, a little suffering means nothing. Physician Bai, feel free to speak of what that needs to be done!"

After discussing with the Great Herb King, Butler Lu looked at Zhang Xuan with determined eyes.

Compared to death, suffering or that sort was nothing.

"I don't require any other preparations. Since you have already said so, I will be executing my secret art now...." Zhang Xuan said seriously.

"Un!"

Butler Lu nodded his head. Then, he asked doubtfully, "Since you're going to use a secret art, do you require us to excuse ourselves...."

Just as the name stated, secret arts tend to be something personal. It might have been inconvenient for Zhang Xuan to display his secret art before so many physicians.

However, before he could finish his words, he saw Physician Bai Chan lift his hands and send a slap straight at the Great Herb King.

Pah!

It was a crisp sound. His palm struck the back of the Great Herb King's head, and before the latter could even react, his vision went dark. With a look of disbelief.... he fainted.

"What are you doing...."

Not expecting the other party to knock the old master out instead of executing his secret art, Butler Lu was enraged. He was about to rush forward when the other party touched the Great Herb King and clapped. "Alright, I'm done executing my secret art...."

"You're done.... executing it?"

The crowd staggered and they nearly fainted on the spot.

Brother, you must be joking with us!

Do you mean to say that.... your secret art is to slap the Great Herb King?

Secret art my foot! Even a dog can execute such a move.... To think that I even thought

of excusing myself so that you can execute it freely....

On the other hand, Mo Yu's slim body was trembling in fear, and she nearly fell limply to the ground.

When the other party declared his intention so confidently previously, she thought that it might be possible that he had a good idea in mind that could help ascertain the illness. To think that this would be it....

Slapping the Great Herb King out of consciousness with a single slap.... If Zhang Xuan failed to come up with a valid excuse, the two of them might very well die here.

"Old master...."

Butler Lu rushed forward and massaged the other party. It took him great effort before the latter regained his consciousness, and only then did he heave a sigh of relief.

Turning to Zhang Xuan, he suppressed his urge to tear the fellow into pieces and spat, "Physician Bai, you...."

Honestly speaking, if the other party hadn't treated the poison in his body, he would certainly have ordered the guards to kill him just now.

The old master's body was already in such a weak condition. Knocking him out.... was no different from murder.

"My secret art requires the patient to be unconscious to be performed. I have no other choice, so I beg of your understanding!"

Zhang Xuan had thought of an excuse beforehand.

"Is there such a secret art?"

"The patient has to be unconscious in order to be diagnosed?"

Members of the crowd stared at one another, and for a moment, they found it hard to comprehend the situation.

Is it possible for such an eccentric skill to exist?

The three 3-star physicians looked at one another, and they could see the confusion in each other's eyes.

They had read countless books in the Physician Guild but had never heard of any diagnosis method that required one to be unconscious. This method was in conflict with the fundamental principles of the Way of Medicine.

"So that's the case...."

Butler Lu hadn't heard of it either, but that fellow's previous action of diagnosing him through his punch was against common sense as well. After hesitating for a moment, he asked, "May I know if Physician Bai was able to ascertain the illness that the old master is suffering from?"

Upon hearing the question, everyone's gazes immediately turned to Zhang Xuan. They wanted to hear what this braggart had to say.

"I've verified the illness!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head. After hesitating for a moment, he sighed, "It's.... suffering for one's own deeds!"

"What did you say?"

Butler Lu was stunned for a moment before he lashed out.

"Audacious!"

The sound of swords being drawn echoed in the air and countless guards charged forward immediately.

Chapter 271

Contract Gu [2in1]

The guards were gritting their teeth and had tolerated the other party's action of knocking the Great Herb King unconscious since he said that it was a secret art.

However, he went overboard and claimed that the Great Herb King reaped what he sowed. That was clear provocation, so how could they take it lying down?

"How dare you!"

"You're looking for death!"

The numerous guards glared furiously at Zhang Xuan, and a cold gleam flashed from the swords in their hands. The moment the command was given, they would immediately mince this braggart of a fellow.

"There must be something wrong with his head."

"I've known Bai Chan for a while, and while his character is so-so, his brain should be functioning normally. Why has he.... become so dumb all of a sudden?"

Initially, everyone thought that Zhang Xuan would bring up some astonishing theory, so upon hearing those words, the physicians present nearly spurted blood. All of them stared at Zhang Xuan dumbfounded as if they had seen a monster.

Every single person who had been to Red Lotus City were all aware of the Great Herb King's might.

In this piece of land, he was no different from an emperor. Even if a prince of Tianwu Kingdom were to come here, he would have no choice but to lower his head before him. Zhang Xuan's action of smacking him unconscious was already provocative, yet he went a step further to say that he was 'suffering for his own deeds'....

Have you grown tired of living, or do you think that the Great Herb King has an amiable personality?

Physician Cheng Feng stared at Zhang Xuan as if he were looking at a fool.

Can it be that.... this fellow's head had been kicked by a savage beast?

Otherwise, why would he say such preposterous words?

"Doomed. This time.... we're really doomed...."

Mo Yu smacked her forehead. At this moment, she was on the verge of tears.

Zhang Xuan could explain his action of knocking the Great Herb King out as a requirement for his secret art, but the words he spoke afterward thoroughly offended the other party. There was no point of return.

If you want to die, go ahead. But why must you drag me down with you....

My purpose here is to gain some knowledge and worldly experience. Who did I offend to warrant this....

Forget it, since we came together, even if this fellow has suicidal tendencies, I shouldn't leave him in the lurch!

Even though she felt stifled, Mo Yu gritted her teeth and spoke telepathically to Zhang Xuan, "Zhang Xuan, inform the Howling Firmament Beast to come over right now. I have with me the formation plate that my father left behind for me. I should be able to buy some time with it, so hurry up. Perhaps, we might still stand a chance."

They might be in the depth of the enemy's base, but given the Howling Firmament Beast's Half-Zhizun cultivation and its ability to fly, there was a good chance that they could successfully flee.

However, the crucial problem was how they could survive until the Howling Firmament Beast's arrival.

Grabbing her storage ring tightly, Mo Yu surveyed her surroundings warily. The moment anyone makes a move on them, she would immediately retrieve and toss the formation plate.

As the princess of a kingdom, she possessed several tricks for survival up her sleeves.

Formation plates were convenient tools on which a large formation was engraved through special means. Even if one wasn't a formation master, one could easily activate it in times of need by pumping their zhenqi into the plate.

While it was significantly weaker than true formations, it was portable and could be triggered instantaneously, making it a nifty tool for survival.

However, this object was expensive and was a one-off consumable. Only someone of her standing would be able to afford it.

"Why should I call for it? Don't worry!"

Seeing the anxiety on the other party's face, Zhang Xuan smiled.

"You...."

Seeing the fellow continue to act so calmly despite being in grave danger, Mo Yu was on the verge of exploding. "You've offended the Great Herb King, and if we don't leave right now, we might just die here!"

"Offended him? I'm explaining his illness to him, how will this offend anyone?" Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually as he assured her. "There's no need to worry, just stay here and wait patiently!"

"Explaining his illness?"

Mo Yu went insane.

How can gloating over the other party by claiming that he is suffering for his own deeds be considered as explaining illness?

I've been an apprentice physician for so long, but I've never heard of such a case.

Stay here and wait patiently? I would really be insane if I were to stay and wait patiently under such circumstances!

Mo Yu was infuriated, but she knew that it wasn't the time to throw a tantrum. She surveyed her surroundings and analyzed the ideal escape path.

If she had known that this fellow was so unreliable, she wouldn't have come

adventuring with him.

"Physician Bai Chan, I've invited you over with goodwill to treat the old master, and yet, you spouted such derogatory words. If you don't explain yourself, you don't even have to dream about leaving this manor!"

Ignoring everyone's shock, Butler Lu flung his sleeves angrily and glared at Zhang Xuan.

If the other party hadn't treated his problem, he would have decapitated the other party with a sword before he had a chance to explain himself.

"There's no need to rush, I'll explain everything clearly. Just that.... there are many people present. Are you sure that you want me to speak?" Zhang Xuan was nonchalant toward his threat, simply smiling in response.

"Stop putting on an act here. No matter how incredible your words may sound, the only thing that awaits you is death!"

"To dare to taint the Great Herb King's honour, you deserve to die!"

"Butler Lu, why waste words on him? With just a single command, we will mince this fool who dares to insult the old master immediately!"

....

Seeing how the other party was unrepentant, the guards were on the brim of erupting. Not hiding their killing intent for Zhang Xuan, they bellowed furiously.

Every single one of these guards was Tongxuan realm experts, and with several dozens of them unleashing their cultivation at once, people in the room began to breathe heavily under the pressure and their hands became moist with perspiration.

Even the faces of the numerous Zongshi realm physicians turned pale. Unable to withstand the might, they retreated uncontrollably.

While Zongshi realm experts were far stronger than Tongxuan realm cultivators, the guards had been living together and had forged a strong teamwork. On top of that, they wielded various lethal measures that even Zongshi realm experts would find it hard to guard against.

"Enough!"

Seeing how the guards were on the verge of attacking Zhang Xuan, Butler Lu waved his hands and roared, "Step down!"

Then, he turned to Zhang Xuan and said, "Physician Bai, these guards are loyal to the old master. Your words have offended them, and if you don't explain yourself, even I will find it hard to stop them."

His words were laced with threat.

If Zhang Xuan failed to provide a reasonable explanation, these guards would destroy him in an instant.

"I'm fine with explaining yourself, but this involves a secret. My view is that I shouldn't speak of it before such a huge crowd!"

Even though he was standing on the edge of the cliff, Zhang Xuan didn't seem worried in the least. He walked leisurely to the Great Herb King and declared calmly, "How about this, I will just say two words. If you think that my diagnosis makes sense, we can talk about it. Otherwise, you can just kill me right away!"

After interacting with the Great Herb King, Butler Lu nodded his head, "Fine!"

"Alright then!"

Zhang Xuan smiled, "My two words are simple.... Contract Gu!"

"Contract Gu? What's that?"

Butler Lu was wondering what miraculous words Zhang Xuan would spout, and he couldn't help but fall into a daze upon hearing his words. Just as he was considering whether he should make mincemeat of the other party, an expression of shock suddenly appeared on the dying Great Herb King's face. His murky and lifeless eyes suddenly gleamed in agitation.

"Get.... get.... the others out...."

Struggling with all his might, his hoarse voice echoed in the air.

"This...."

Seeing how Bai Chan had caused the withered Great Herb King to struggle so terribly to speak with merely two words, everyone turned to look at him as though he was a monster.

They thought that he was doomed and didn't expect such a twist.

Can it be that.... these two words wield some kind of magic?

"Old master!"

Seeing the old master speak, Butler Lu rushed to him immediately. Then after a moment of conversation, he stood up and scanned the surroundings.

"I apologize, but the diagnosis ends here, so I'll have to invite all of you to leave! I will have my men send the compensation each of you."

After which, he couldn't help but glance at Zhang Xuan.

The Great Herb King's condition was critical and he wasn't able to say anything. Even so, Butler Lu had been serving the other party for numerous years, and he was able to understand the other party's intention just through his gaze.

The old master's intentions were simple.

Do as Physician Bai says! He's the only one who can save him!

Can such a brazen fellow, who seemed to be spouting nonsense, really be capable of saving the old master?

Can it be that it is as he said, that the old master is suffering for his own deeds?

"Alright!"

"Great Herb King and Butler Lu, we will be taking our leaves then!"

Seeing that Butler Lu had already invited them to leave, even though the crowd was baffled within, they turned around to leave without any hesitation. However, before walking out of the lounge, they couldn't help but send a confused glance at Physician

Bai Chan.

With just two words, this fellow is able to get the Great Herb King to chase them out. Can his words be really true?

But.... I don't recall any illness that is called [Contract Gu]....

"You all should leave as well!"

Ignoring the bewilderment that the crowd was in, Butler Lu ordered for the guards to leave as well.

"Yes!"

Knowing that this was the intention of the old master, they answered and left the lounge quickly.

Upon seeing everyone leave, Mo Yu hesitated for a moment and, eventually, decided to remain.

Regardless of whether the fellow was right or not and whether he would be reduced to meat mince in a moment's time, she had come with him, and it wouldn't be right for her to leave alone.

Even though the prideful princess had an unpleasant mouth, she seemed to be a loyal buddy. Inconspicuously, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in response to her decision.

Soon, they were the only ones left in the room.

"Physician Bai Chan, now that everyone has left, can you explain the matter?"

Knowing that Mo Yu came along with Physician Bai, Butler Lu turned to Zhang Xuan and bowed respectfully.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded. "Actually, I already had a rough idea of the situation when I first saw the Great Herb King earlier. After using my secret art, I have now ascertained his condition...."

At which, lamentation flashed through Zhang Xuan's eyes. "The Great Herb King isn't ill or poisoned. Rather, he's afflicted by something called [Contract Gu]! This was

implanted in him when he made a deal with a specific someone, and now that the person is dead, under the effects of the Contract Gu, he, expectedly, will lose his life as well!"

"Contract Gu.... What's that?" Butler Lu was still unable to comprehend the situation.

Despite coming into contact with physicians and medicinal herbs daily, he had never heard of this term.

The Great Herb King clearly knew what the other party was talking about, but it wasn't convenient for him to speak now. Even though Butler Lu could perform basic communication with him, it was impossible for the other party to express such a complicated matter.

"Contract Gu is a special practice used when making a deal with someone to win the other party's trust, and it is one of the means unique to a poison master. To summarize, it is similar to the life and death contract between beast tamers and their savage beast. Once established, it is equivalent to becoming a loyal subordinate of the other party. Once the master dies, the subordinate wouldn't live for long either, and he would soon follow the other party."

"This thing is normally used by poison masters to manipulate their subordinates. The moment one establishes the contract, his life and death are no longer within his control. If he were to disobey the will of his master, he would suffer the ache of thousands of bugs nibbling at his heart!"

With a grim expression, Zhang Xuan explained slowly.

"Is there.... such a thing in this world?"

Butler Lu was astonished. He found the entire affair hard to believe.

If the other party hadn't spoken of it, he would have never believed that such a thing could exist.

At the same time, Mo Yu's eyes were about to pop out from her sockets.

She hadn't heard of Contract Gu, but she knew clearly what a life and death contract was.

With this kind of contract, the moment the master dies, regardless of how strong or where a savage beast was, it would also breathe its last.

From Zhang Xuan's descriptions, it seemed that the Contract Gu was much more potent than that. If that was truly the case, didn't that mean that humans could be commanded and tamed as though savage beasts?

That was an extremely terrifying thought!

"Can it be.... that this Contract Gu is related to the old master's condition?"

Butler Lu recovered from the shock, but his face remained ghastly pale.

"Not only is it related, it is exactly the cause of it!"

Glancing at the Great Herb King, Zhang Xuan shook his head in lamentation. "As the Great Herb King and the sovereign of the Red Lotus City, he chose to become another person's subordinate and willingly allowed the other party to implant this kind of vicious gu into him. If this wasn't suffering for his own deeds, what else can it be?"

The emperor of Tianwu Kingdom dared not to offend the Great Herb King of Red Lotus City, and 3-star physicians willingly lowered their heads before him. His standing was far superior to the kings of Tier 2 Kingdoms. Despite possessing such prestige, he willingly consumed a Contract Gu to become another person's servant. If this wasn't courting his own death, what else could it be?

He couldn't blame anyone else for his own plight.

Upon hearing those words, the dried face of the Great Herb King turned slightly red. Regret brimmed in his eyes.

"Physician Bai, please save the old master!"

Finally knowing what the old master was suffering from, Butler Lu's body trembled, his knees bent, and he knelt to the floor.

Watching the old master grow weaker and weaker and being unable to identify the cause had left him distraught, but as the second-in-command of the manor, he couldn't cave in. Now that a glimmer of hope had finally appeared before him, he could no longer hold it in.

Having grown up in the Great Herb King Manor, he possessed absolute loyalty toward the Great Herb King.

On top of that, if the old master were to die, the other herb kings would make use of this opportunity to attack the manor and the Great Herb King Manor's crumble would be absolute. As the butler of the manor, he would suffer the brunt of the impact, and it would be hard for him to live for long.

Regardless of whether it was for his loyalty toward the Great Herb King or for his own life, he mustn't allow anything to happen to the Great Herb King.

Since this Physician Bai was able to see through and treat his own affliction, as well as determine the root of the old master's frailty, he might have a solution for the matter.

"Get up first!" Zhang Xuan reached out to help the other party up. Shaking his head, he said, "Once the contract is established, the Contract Gu enters one's bloodstream. It is extremely difficult to solve the matter!"

After establishing a contract, the gu worm dives into one's innards and moves along with his blood flow. It is impossible for it to be located and destroyed.

"As long as Physician Bai treats the old master, the Great Herb King Manor is willing to accede to any of your requests...." Butler Lu clenched his jaws.

"To save him, I'll have to find the location of the gu worm and extract or exterminate it!"

Zhang Xuan explained.

"However, the gu worm is alive, and it flows along with the blood. The moment it realizes that it is in danger, it will escape immediately. How can I capture it like that?"

The main reason for the Great Herb King's suffering was the gu worm living in his body. The solution for the problem actually sounded extremely easy; one merely had to extract or exterminate it. However, it was hard to put into practice.

That thing lives in one's bloodstream, and cannot be seen or felt. In addition, it is constantly moving about and knows how to avoid danger. How is it possible to remove and destroy it?

Before the gu worm can be killed, the person would have probably died first.

"Since Physician Bai is able to determine what the old master is suffering from, you must have a solution. I beseech you to save him!"

Butler Lu knelt down once more.

The many physicians that had examined the old master weren't even able to identify the illness. Bai Chan was their only hope.

"I can save him, but.... I have a condition!"

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan said.

While others would be hard-pressed to look for the gu worm, Zhang Xuan was different. With the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan could plainly see the location of the gu worm. Thus, it was still possible for him to treat the Great Herb King.

"Physician Bai, feel free to speak of your condition!"

Hearing that the other party could really treat him, Butler Lu clenched his fists tightly in agitation.

"I want to go to the Poison Hall. I hope that someone can bring me there after I cure the Great Herb King!"

Zhang Xuan glanced at Butler Lu.

"This...."

Butler Lu didn't expect the other party to come up with such a condition. "Currently, the Poison Hall isn't accepting any guests, especially physicians. It'll be extremely dangerous for you to head there now!"

Poison masters and physicians are at perennially odds. Aren't you, a physician, courting death to want to visit the Poison Hall?

"Dangerous for me to head there now? What do you mean?"

Noticing a hidden meaning to the other party's words, Zhang Xuan stared at him

doubtfully.

Glancing at the old master and seeing that the other party wasn't objectionable to him revealing the issue, Butler Lu gritted his teeth and said, "An internal conflict has broken out within the Poison Hall, and it is currently closed to outsiders. They refused all guests, and even the old master isn't allowed to enter. Heading there now.... is truly an unwise decision!"

"Internal conflict?"

"Yes!" Butler Lu said. "However, if Physician Bai really wishes to visit the Poison Hall, the conflict should probably die down within a year. By then, it should be much safer...."

"A year? That's too long!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

In the first place, the reason why he chose to disguise as Physician Bai Chan instead of taking the physician examination at Tianwu Kingdom was so that he could get to the Poison Hall as soon as possible to resolve the poisonous aura that was lingering in his body. Since he was unwilling to wait even a month, how could he possibly wait a year?

What joke is this!

"As long as you bring me to the entrance of the Poison Hall, I'll settle the rest myself. If you promise to accede to my condition, I will save the old master now. Otherwise, let's forget about everything!"

Zhang Xuan calmly said.

"However, I doubt that there's anyone else in the surrounding thirteen kingdoms who can save the old master!"

The other party seemed to be determined. Thus, Butler Lu turned to consult the old master, and upon seeing him blink his eyes, turned back to Zhang Xuan.

"Alright, the old master has agreed!"

"Un!"

Zhang Xuan nodded, "Place your old master horizontally. I'll begin my treatment now."

"Yes!"

Given that this was the Great Herb King Manor, Butler Lu wasn't worried about the other party doing anything foolish. Thus, he adjusted the reclining chair to place the old master in a lying position.

Knowing that the other party was about to remove the Contract Gu from his body, nervousness flashed on the Great Herb King's dry face.

Butler Lu and Mo Yu might have never heard of the Contract Gu, but as the person who had it implanted into his body, he knew that there was nearly no cure for it.

Yet, the person before him claimed that he was capable of treating it! Even though he didn't truly believe the other party's words, he, nevertheless, wanted to give it a try.

Hu!

Since he had already decided to treat the other party, Zhang Xuan immediately got on with it. With a jerk of his hand, a box of silver needles appeared in his palm.

Then, submerging his consciousness into the library, he flipped to the page where the flaws were listed (which reflects the location of the Contract Gu's worm).

He drove his zhenqi and immediately pierced a silver needle right at the spot where the worm was last located.

The silver needle which was infused with the Heaven's Path zhenqi would definitely be able to easily destroy the gu worm if it were to pierce through it.

"Hm?"

After piercing the needle into the other party's body, Zhang Xuan circulated zhenqi around the other party's body for a moment. Noticing the absence of the presence of the gu worm, Zhang Xuan's complexion darkened.

"The gu worm actually escaped...."

Time was wasted discussing the matter after the compilation of the book, and the gu

worm in the Great Herb King was no longer at the position indicated in the book.

It seemed that the book had to be refreshed for him to pinpoint the new location of the gu worm.

Hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan turned to look at the Great Herb King sheepishly.

"Great Herb King, I'm sorry but.... is it convenient for you to pass out once more?"

Gu is a venomous being used often in voodoo and black magic in the south China.

There are many methods of preparations depending on the custom, but the most traditional one is to keep countless poisonous animals into one jar and let them fight it out.

Chapter 272

I Understand

"Are you asking if it's convenient for.... him to pass out once more?"

Butler Lu and Mo Yu's mouths twitched.

The Great Herb King shook his head vigorously.

No one liked to be knocked out, so who would possibly agree that it's convenient for them to pass out?

Hearing those words, the Great Herb King would have struck first if not for his physical disability, needless to say, to allow the other party to knock him out.

"Physician Bai Chan, this...."

Seeing the objection in the old master's eyes, Butler Lu hurriedly spoke up. However, before he could finish his words, the middle-aged man before him seemed to have come to an epiphany, "Forget it, there's no use asking you about it. It's best that I do it myself!"

Thus, he stretched out his arm.

Padah!

With tears brimming in his eyes, the Great Herb King passed out once more.

Having knocked out the Great Herb King, Zhang Xuan noticed that Butler Lu was in the middle of his words and turned to look at him with a doubtful expression, "What's wrong?"

"I.... That.... Nothing!"

Butler Lu smiled awkwardly.

He had intended to stop the other party and to see if there was a way to treat the old master without knocking him out. However, since the daylights had already been knocked out of the old master, there was no longer any need for him to speak up.

"Un, I'll continue on with the treatment then!"

With the Great Herb King now unconscious, the book in Zhang Xuan's hands jolted the moment he came into contact with the other party's body.

The location of the gu worm was refreshed.

Having ascertained the location, Zhang Xuan's hands jerked, and a silver needle was pierced into the other party's body.

"Hm? I missed it...."

Checking the area with his zhenqi, he realized that the gu worm had escaped once again.

"Looks like killing the gu worm is much more difficult than I have expected!" Zhang Xuan's expression was grim.

He thought that it would be easy for him to eradicate the gu worm with the Library of Heaven's Path providing him its location. However, from the looks of it, he had underestimated the gu worm.

Even though the delay between browsing the book in the library and the piercing of the needle was extremely short, it was more than sufficient for the gu worm to escape from its original position.

Zhang Xuan touched the Great Herb King once more and pierced a silver needle into the other party's body.

Puhe! Puhe! Puhe!

Under the numerous assaults by the silver needle, the gu worm seemed to have realized that it was in danger, and it escaped furiously through the other party's blood vessels.

"The blood vessels within a human are complicated, and countless small capillaries

spread out across the entire body. If this goes on, I won't be able to catch it even after a day of effort. I have to find a way to corner it before I can destroy it!"

After inserting a few needles in quick succession, he noticed that the gu worm moved faster and faster, and its movements were erratic without any specific pattern. Troubled, a deep crease emerged on Zhang Xuan's forehead.

"Is it dead yet...."

After a dozen of consecutive needles, Zhang Xuan eventually managed to force it to a corner and just as he was about to deal the final blow, a weak voice sounded. Turning his head to take a look, he saw that the Great Herb King had roused from his sleep.

Him becoming awake meant that the location of the gu worm on his book in the library couldn't be refreshed.

Knowing that there was no time to be wasted, Zhang Xuan didn't even bother to speak this time. He stretched out his hand immediately and 'padah!', the other party was knocked out once more.

"Not good! That fellow has escaped again...."

By the time the book was updated, the gu worm had already escaped. Zhang Xuan's expression darkened.

The other party's awakening had hastened his blood flow, allowing the gu worm to escape far away from Zhang Xuan's encirclement.

"Damn it!"

He didn't expect that a small gu worm would be that sly. With his eyebrows shot up, he turned to Butler Lu.

"Come here. Knock out the old master the moment he awakens...."

The Great Herb King's cultivation had reached Zongshi realm pinnacle. Even though his body had been driven to the brink of death under the torture of the gu worm, the defensive mechanism from the zhenqi in his body remained functioning, allowing him to recover swiftly from his unconscious state.

On the other hand, in order not to worsen the dying Great Herb King's condition, Zhang Xuan couldn't exert too much force when knocking him out.

In order to prevent the gu worm from getting away again due to him awaking, it was best to make preparations beforehand.

Thus, Zhang Xuan decided to render Butler Lu's help. With someone to knock the Great Herb King out, Zhang Xuan would be able to direct his undivided attention toward killing the worm.

"Knock the old master out the moment he awakens...."

Butler Lu's body trembled in agitation, and he was on the verge of tears.

The man before him was his old master. If he were to do this, he could imagine the kind of trouble that would await him if the old master were to choose to pursue this matter in the future....

"Can I turn down your request...."

"Don't waste my time, hurry up!"

Seeing a conflicted expression on the other party, Zhang Xuan frowned. "If you don't want to save the old master, feel free to reject my request!"

"I...."

Even though Butler Lu was torn, he knew that the priority was to save the old master. Thus, he walked over and stretched out his hand.

Just as his heart was in turmoil, Mo Yu's voice suddenly sounded.

"That.... Physicians often use [Soul Numbing Powder] to knock their patients out. With a single whiff, one should stay unconscious for a significant period of time. Furthermore, it doesn't hurt one's body.... Will that work?"

"Soul Numbing Powder? Is there such a thing? Of course, it will work!"

Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

His goal was just to keep the other party in an unconscious state. It didn't matter whether the other party was knocked out through physical means or through medicine.

"The Soul Numbing Powder works as well?"

Hearing Zhang Xuan's reply sent tears flowing down Butler Lu and Mo Yu's face.

The Soul Numbing Powder was a common medicine used by physicians, and it was often utilized on the less courageous patients. There wasn't a single physician who hasn't heard of it, and most would carry several doses with them wherever they go....

Yet, this fellow has never heard of it....

The heck!

If not for the incredible skills he has displayed, we would really doubt if he is a physician!

Otherwise, how can he possibly not know the basics?

If Zhang Xuan had used this earlier, the Great Herb King wouldn't have to be smacked on the head so many times. If this continued, even if he successfully treated the other party, it was likely that the Great Herb King would become dumb from the multiple impacts on his head....

"We have the medicine here, I'll fetch it right now...."

Fearful that the old master would be struck once more, Butler Lu rushed out in a hurry.

The Great Herb King dealt in medicine, and it was absurd to think that they wouldn't possess such an elementary herb in their storage. In no time, Butler Lu arrived with several sacks.

Zhang Xuan grabbed a sack casually and placed it before the Great Herb King's nostril. As expected, the medicine quickly sent the latter into a deep sleep, and it didn't seem likely that he would regain consciousness so soon.

"To think that you would have such a good stuff. You should have taken it out earlier!"

Seeing how amazing the medicine was, Zhang Xuan glared at Butler Lu.

"I...."

Butler Lu felt wronged.

As a physician, you brought a cleaver into the surgery room. Naturally, I thought that you specialize in using it. Who in the world would expect that.... you don't even know what a scalpel is....

Mo Yu shot a look of sympathy at Butler Lu as well. If not for her having gotten used to Zhang Xuan's bizarre actions, she herself would have thought that he was doing it on purpose.

Under the potency of the Soul Numbing Powder, the Great Herb King fell into deep sleep. Zhang Xuan continued with his treatment; leaving a single hand in constant contact with the other party's body while having the other hand pierce needles into the other party swiftly, forcing the gu worm to a corner in the bloodstream.

This time, his operation went successfully and the gu worm was entrapped shortly.

"Go!"

With a jerk of Zhang Xuan's fingers, a silver needle immediately pierced straight into the Great Herb King's body.

Jijiji!

In that instant, a piercing shrill sounded from the Great Herb King's body and the worm could be seen to be struggling about in his blood vessel.

"Die!"

With a tap of his finger, a surge of pure zhenqi flowed into the other party's body through the silver needle. And in the next instant, the worm, as though meeting with its nemesis, thrashed for awhile longer before falling motionless.

Just like any other poisonous substances, the Heaven's Path zhenqi, which was reminiscent of pure water, was the gu worm's greatest nemesis. Upon contact, that resilient lifeform crumbled immediately and died on the spot.

"Come on out!"

Exerting pressure on the other party's blood vessel, Zhang Xuan sent a burst of zhenqi into the other party, and the silver needle and gu worm flew out simultaneously.

Padah! The two landed on the floor.

"Is this the so-called Contract Gu?"

Butler Lu and Mo Yu walked over immediately.

The gu worm on the floor was the size of a firefly. There were unique runes scribbled on its dark green body, and it looked so disgusting that it could send a cold chill down one's spine.

"Un!"

Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply.

The greatest problem that plagued the Great Herb King's body was this gu worm. With this little fellow extracted from his body, his languishing body should recover with time.

Moments after removing the sack of Soul Numbing Powder from the other party's nostril, the Great Herb King slowly awoke.

"Old master...."

Butler Lu walked forward.

"Do I.... still need to be knocked out?"

After waking up, the Great Herb King glanced at Zhang Xuan and his lips quivered uncontrollably.

He was traumatized after getting knocked out continuously.

He was afraid that a fist would be awaiting him the moment he awoke.

"There's no need for that anymore. The gu worm has already been killed!"

Butler Lu pointed to the worm on the floor.

"It's dead?"

The Great Herb King was taken aback. Glancing at the corpse of the gu worm on the floor, his face reddened in agitation.

After being afflicted with the Contract Gu, his life and death became something beyond his control. The reason why the Contract Gu was used to gain another's trust was that even the most incredible poison masters were unable to cure one of it. Yet, the physician before him was able to kill it easily. Even though he had witnessed the event personally with his own two eyes, he found the situation hard to believe nevertheless.

"Physician Bai, thank you for saving my life!"

Standing up from the reclining chair, the Great Herb King knelt to the floor.

Initially, he thought that it was his fate to die from the Contract Gu. Never in his dreams did he expect that he would be saved by the man standing before him!

In order to be rescued from his despair, not to mention three times, even if he were to be knocked out ten times or hundred times, it would have been worth the suffering.

"Old master, you.... you...."

Seeing the Great Herb King get up to kneel on the floor, Butler Lu grew agitated.

It was just awhile ago that the old master was unable to move or speak. Yet, at this moment, he had stood up and knelt down all by himself. This went to show that his body was already starting to recover.

"With the gu worm in my body dead, my strength is gradually returning to me. However, the trauma within caused by it isn't resolved yet. Physician Bai, I beseech you to treat me...."

Stopping Butler Lu from helping him up, the Great Herb King kowtowed to Zhang Xuan.

While the death of the gu worm had solved the root of the problem, that little fellow had been on a rampage inside the Great Herb King's body for the past few days,

sapping his spirit and energy dry. He would still require the help of this physician to nourish his damaged body and rejuvenate his stamina.

Otherwise, now possessing the appearance of a person in his nineties despite not having reached even fifty, it was clear that he would not have long to live.

"You want me to solve your current problem?"

Reading through his book in the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan frowned.

Tortured by the Contract Gu for numerous days, his body was severely injured. If not for the innumerable precious herbs he possessed as the Great Herb King, he wouldn't have been able to survive until this day.

His physical and mental frailty could only be gradually treated through the consumption of various tonics over a long period of time. However.... Zhang Xuan was different.

Not only could the Heaven's Path zhenqi heal one's stamina and bring him back to his peak, it could also heal the Great Herb King's damaged blood vessels completely, simply by driving it through his bloodstream.

However, the Heaven's Path zhenqi was too pure. Previously, when Zhang Xuan was treating the other party, he was unconscious. Furthermore, by the time he awoke, the Heaven's Path zhenqi had already melded as one with the zhenqi in his body, making it impossible for the other party to detect any abnormality.

However, if Zhang Xuan were to treat him now, the other party would definitely realize the uniqueness of his zhenqi, and this could bring about unwanted trouble.

Zhang Xuan was unwilling to take this risk.

"I can treat you, but...."

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan spoke up. However, before he could finish his words, he realized that the Great Herb King was staring at him with incredible determination.

"Physician Bai, you need not speak any further. I understand!"

After which, he lifted his hand and struck his head.

Padah!

He fell limply onto the floor, unconscious.

Chapter 273

What's Going On [2in1]

Not expecting the other party to knock himself out before he could finish his words, Zhang Xuan became speechless.

"Cough cough, what I meant to say was.... I can solve your problem, but you'll have to increase the compensation. How can I negotiate with you now that you're unconscious?"

Zhang Xuan's condition for removing the Contract Gu from the other party's body was to bring him to the Poison Hall. Zhang Xuan had fulfilled his end of the deal, but the other party was now requesting for him to treat his wounded body. This was an entirely different matter, and Zhang Xuan couldn't possibly expend his own zhenqi for nothing.

Yet, before he could say anything, the other party had already fainted.

No matter what, I am a physician. Aren't you being too disrespectful to me?

Hearing Zhang Xuan mutter to himself, Butler Lu hurried up to Zhang Xuan and coughed awkwardly, "The old master wishes for you to treat him as soon as possible. If Physician Bai has any requests, feel free to speak to me of it. I'll do my best to satisfy them!"

"That's more like it!"

Zhang Xuan nodded, "How about this, you're selling this [Soul Numbing Powder] as well right? If so, you should have an inventory of it. Help me prepare three doses.... No, ten doses."

If Zhang Xuan had this, he wouldn't have to resort to knocking anyone out by force again.

Since he had learned of this object, it was only natural for him to want more of it. Who else would he exploit if not the rich tycoon in front of him?

"Ten doses of Soul Numbing Powder?"

Butler Lu blinked.

"Indeed. Don't tell me that your Great Herb King Manor can't even afford this meager amount of medicinal herbs?" Zhang Xuan frowned. At the same time, he was pondering whether he had asked for too much and that the other party was incapable of bringing out that much.

"No, it's.... it's that...." Butler Lu seemed conflicted by the request and he looked as though he was suffering from constipation. "It's that this object is too inexpensive...."

The Soul Numbing Powder was one of the most fundamental prescriptions in a physician's arsenal. A single dose costs only a few hundred gold coins, and ten of it was worth mere thousands. To think this little amount of money could save the old master's life....

Aren't you thinking to cheaply of the Great Herb King's life?

"Inexpensive?"

Zhang Xuan was taken aback. He immediately turned to Mo Yu, only to see her nodding her head with a speechless expression. Only then did he laugh awkwardly, "That.... right. Do you have any Half-Zongshi and Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals in your manor? The tier of the manual doesn't matter, and all I need is quantity. If you can manage to gather more than a thousand of them, I will accept it as the compensation."

Zhang Xuan's cultivation had already reached Tongxuan realm pinnacle, and to achieve a breakthrough, he would have to gather higher-realm secret manuals.

Tianxuan Kingdom was too backward, and excluding the old ancestor, the strongest cultivators were merely at Tongxuan realm pinnacle. As such, there was only a handful Half-Zongshi realm manuals in its territory. Red Lotus City was the city of a Tier 1 Kingdom, as well as a medicinal herb trading hub, so it might be possible for the other party to gather a sizeable quantity amount of cultivation technique manuals for him.

"Half-Zongshi and Zongshi realm secret manuals? More than a thousand of them?"

Not having expected Physician Bai Chan to ask for something so peculiar, Butler Lu

contemplated for a moment before answering, "Our Great Herb King Manor controls the flow of all medicinal herbs in Tianwu Kingdom and the twelve surrounding nations. Many cultivators do not possess sufficient money to purchase herbs, so they could only trade in their unique secret manuals."

"Thus, we have accumulated several hundreds of Half-Zongshi secret manuals over the years. With the rallying ability of our Great Herb King Manor, we should be able to gather more than a thousand books swiftly. As for Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals.... If you have no requirements on the tier, it isn't a problem for us to gather a few hundred books for you. However, gathering above a thousand of it would be difficult."

"Alright, I'll take these then!"

Hearing that the other party could gather more than a thousand Half-Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals and a few hundred Zongshi realm manuals, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. He nodded in agreement hurriedly.

As expected of a city of Tianwu Kingdom, resources flowing through this single city weren't what that the entire Tianxuan Kingdom could compare up to.

With sufficient manuals, Zhang Xuan would be able to reach Half-Zongshi or even Zongshi realm effortlessly. By then, he should at least possess the ability to protect himself in the Poison Hall.

"Alright, you should go on and make arrangements. I'll treat the old master now!"

Contented with the compensation, Zhang Xuan instructed Butler Lu before grabbing the Great Herb King's arm and beginning to transfuse a surge of Heaven's Path zhenqi into his meridians.

Actually, why the Great Herb King looked lifeless and withered was because of the blockage in his meridian, causing the flow of his zhenqi to stagnate. As long as Zhang Xuan cleared up the blockages, the other party's dense and powerful Zongshi zhenqi would naturally rejuvenate his spirit, energy, and soul, thus inducing a complete recovery.

Boom!

The pure zhenqi gushed through the blocked meridians one after another. The damage

left behind by the Contract Gu, as though snow meeting with the radiant sun, disappeared completely.

The dry and loose skin on the Great Herb King regained its elasticity and liveliness. In an instant, he seemed to have turned several decades younger.

"This...."

Mo Yu, who was standing by the side, blinked her eyes furiously, unable to believe her sight.

She thought that Zhang Xuan's treatment, like any other physicians, would require the complement of medicinal herbs, and would be over the course of numerous months. She hadn't expected the Great Herb King to recover instantly just by having his wrist grabbed....

Is this really something a physician can do?

Why haven't I heard of it?

All of her preconceptions of the world seemed to be overthrown one after another.

"Alright!"

Soon, the Heaven's Path zhenqi circulated a full round around the other party's body, clearing all of the blockages completely. Zhang Xuan stood up and exhaled deeply.

It was much easier than he expected.

The Great Herb King, who had his trauma resolved, slowly awoke from his slumber. Feeling the softness and elasticity of his skin and the overwhelming strength surging through his body, even though the Great Herb King was impressed, he wasn't as surprised as Mo Yu.

The physician before him had managed to cure him of his Contract Gu, a feat which countless physicians and poison masters were incapable of. Rather, it would be bizarre if he couldn't do something as easy as treating his wounds.

"Physician Bai Chan, you have my gratitude!"

The Great Herb King's face flushed in agitation as he knelt onto the floor once more.

If not for the physician before him, he would have been dead by now.

The gratitude he felt wasn't something that could be measured using money.

"It's merely a deal! However, I'm curious why a person of your standing would accept a Contract Gu and allow yourself to be manipulated."

Zhang Xuan waved casually before turning to look at the Great Herb King doubtfully.

Mo Yu was baffled as well.

The Great Herb King's status and influence were so great that even the Tianwu Kingdom's royal family didn't dare to offend him. Yet, such a great person actually chose to take on a Contract Gu. This was something beyond their imagination.

"Sigh, this is a long story. If you knew the person whom I formed a contract with, you would not be thinking like that!"

Seeing the doubt in the duo's eyes, the Great Herb King flashed a bitter smile.

The other party had saved his life, and he felt that his life belonged to the other party. Thus, he didn't think that there was anything inappropriate to say before the other party and didn't intend to hide anything from him.

"The person I contracted with is.... the Hall Master of the Poison Hall!"

"Hall Master of the Poison Hall?"

"Un!" The Great Herb King nodded his head. With a complex expression, he explained, "The Great Herb King may seem like an awe-inspiring and powerful figure whom no one in the Red Lotus City dares to offend, but the truth is that we're merely the spokespersons for the Poison Hall! I'm not the only one; every single Great Herb King of previous generations had established a contract with Poison Hall Masters and became their puppets."

"Every single generation?"

Zhang Xuan and Mo Yu was stunned. However, as they thought further, they realized

that it was logical.

The Red Lotus City was the only intermediary to the Poison Hall, and it was hard to believe that the Poison Hall didn't establish any power within the city.

Without the support of the Poison Hall, how could the Great Herb King of every generation control the gigantic medicinal herb market and earn massive profits? Similarly, they wouldn't have been able to kill princes and princesses of the various kingdoms without fear either.

It was only because of the Poison Hall's support that the Red Lotus City was powerful.

Otherwise, how could a declining ancient city be able to stand against powerful countries like Tianwu?

After all, Tianwu Kingdom had the backing of several 2-star master teachers.

With the guidance of a master teacher of such tier, even though it would be pushing it to say that everyone was an expert, the average level of cultivation within the city was much higher than that of Tianxuan Kingdom. Its army was capable of splitting the ocean and collapsing mountains. If not for the backing of the Poison Hall, how could a mere Red Lotus City escape the Tianwu Kingdom's jurisdiction?

Otherwise, it would have long been destroyed.

"The only reason why a Contract Gu would act up is that a contractee is dead. Could it be that....

Upon realizing something, Zhang Xuan turned to look at the Great Herb King.

"That's right!" The Great Herb King nodded. "The Hall Master is dead!"

"Butler Lu wasn't lying when he said that an internal conflict has broken out within the Poison Hall, and it is turning away all guests! The Hall Master died abruptly without declaring his successor, and three candidates are currently vying for the top seat, resulting in chaos. Even I myself am trying to keep away from the Poison Hall or else, I might not even know how I die."

The Great Herb King smiled bitterly, "To them, I am only a puppet. As long as the Poison Hall exists, they can always raise a new Great Herb King."

Even though he did not want to admit it, Zhang Xuan knew that it was true.

With the strength of the Poison Hall, it was merely a walk in the park to make someone the Great Herb King.

For the prestigious and powerful Great Herb King to be an inconsequential puppet, it would be hard for anyone to believe it to be true if not hearing it from the person himself.

The Great Herb King glanced at Zhang Xuan with a grim expression. "Physician Bai Chan, you saved me, and in return, I'll bring you to the Poison Hall. However.... There are currently three candidates vying for the seat, and the Poison Hall is filled with uncountable dangers. Death is the only thing that awaits any visitor. If you have time to spare, you can stay here in my manor for the moment, and I'll help you look into the matter. If we go after the Hall Master is confirmed, we'll be spared from unnecessary danger."

The fight over the position of Hall Master was no different from princes vying for the throne; it would be filled with schemes and assassinations.

If outsiders were to enter, it was highly likely that they would be taken as pawns, and they wouldn't even realize how they had died.

It wasn't wrong to say that the Poison Hall at present was at its most chaotic and dangerous.

However, once the Hall Master was confirmed, the situation would settle down, and the place would become much safer.

"I can't wait that long!"

Even though Zhang Xuan knew that what the other party said was valid, he couldn't wait that long.

The poison aura in his body was suppressed by Heaven's Path zhenqi, but no one could guarantee when it would counterattack.

If it was just three to five days, he could still wait. However, a year or two was too long for him.

"Actually.... If Physician Bai does have a pressing urgency, there's another way."

Seeing that his benefactor seemed to be in a rush to head to the Poison Hall, the Great Herb King contemplated for a moment before speaking, "The three main disciples of the old Hall Master each possess support from a faction of the Poison Hall, and their influences are roughly equal. Under normal circumstances, it would be impossible for a victor to emerge without a year or two of grinding it out. However, there is an exception."

"Tell me about it!" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

The Great Herb King continued, "Just like the Apothecary Guild and Blacksmith Guild, the Poison Hall has a headquarter and numerous branches. The Poison Hall in our Red Lotus Range is a minor branch of the lot!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head.

After reading through books of all kinds, Zhang Xuan knew that the Tianwu Kingdom and the other countries surrounding it formed just a small part of the world.

While the Poison Hall of the Red Lotus Range was famous, its reputation was limited to the area around Tianwu Kingdom.

Much more incredible branches could be found in higher tier kingdoms.

"Based on what I know, the old Hall Master died suddenly, and he didn't appoint a successor beforehand. Thus, the elders in the hall have reported this matter to the headquarter! If the headquarter decides to interfere, it will send an envoy to calm the chaos and decide on the new Hall Master. If so, the entire process can be resolved quickly!"

The Great Herb King said.

"Oh? There's such a matter as well?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

All branches had to follow arrangements by the headquarter.

No matter how chaotic the situation was after the death of the Hall Master, the envoy from the headquarter should be able to resolve the issue swiftly.

"In such situations, how long does it usually take for the Poison Hall to send an envoy? Also, how soon will the internal conflict be resolved? Are there any precedents?"

Zhang Xuan could not help but ask.

"There are indeed precedents in the history of the Poison Hall, but...."

The Great Herb King hesitated for a moment before smiling bitterly, "This time, I can't confirm this matter. While the Poison Hall of the Red Lotus Range sounds impressive, it is just an unimpressive countryside branch to the headquarter. If an envoy is sent over, the conflict should be settled in less than half a month. However.... If the headquarter feels that it is a waste of personnel and decides not to send anyone over, it will take at least one to two years!"

Even though an envoy could settle the issue easily, the Red Lotus Range Poison Hall branch was an unimportant branch, and the headquarter might think that there was no need to waste any effort on it. Thus, it wouldn't be unordinary if they did not send any personnel.

There were similar cases in the past.

As such, it was difficult to guess the headquarters' decision.

Even the Great Herb King was unable to determine when the internal conflict would end.

"Even so, I can't simply keep waiting like that!"

After hearing the other party's explanation, Zhang Xuan felt even more dismal.

He needed to gather sufficient books on poison to learn how to rectify the hidden poison aura in his body. He couldn't possibly wait mindlessly for news which might not arrive.

"The best way is to keep waiting. However, if Physician Bai hopes to head there now, I can bring you there. Just that.... I can't guarantee your safety!"

The Great Herb King hesitated before speaking.

"Allow me to consider for a moment!"

Zhang Xuan's main purpose of heading to the Poison Hall was for the books. As long as he didn't interfere in their fight for the position of the Hall Master, he should be able to stay out of danger.

But of course, he didn't know much about the poison masters, so he couldn't say for sure.

He could only go with the flow.

"After you're done collecting the books, let's head to the Poison Hall!"

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a short while before making up his mind.

It wasn't easy for him to come to the Red Lotus City, and he couldn't wait endlessly for the conflict to cease. Thus, he decided to brush aside the internal conflict and do what he had to do.

But before that, it was imperative for him to raise his cultivation.

As long as he achieved Zongshi realm pinnacle, with the Library of Heaven's Path and his pure Heaven's Path zhenqi, he would be able to match even a Half-Zhizun. Even if those from the Poison Hall wanted to kill him, it would not be an easy task.

"Collecting the books?"

The Great Herb King asked doubtfully.

When Zhang Xuan was negotiating the terms with Butler Lu, the Great Herb King has already knocked himself unconscious, so he wasn't aware of the deal.

"It's like that...." Zhang Xuan explained.

"Oh, so Physician Bai wants those books. That isn't a difficult task, I'll supervise them personally. Within three days, we should be able to gather all of the Half-Zongshi and Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals in Red Lotus City!"

Upon hearing that Physician Bai Chan wanted these books as compensation, the Great Herb King was taken aback. Then, he smiled, and intense confidence shone through his eyes.

He had managed Red Lotus City for many years, and it was under his complete control. Those books might be precious, but if he were to demand them personally, it would be an easy feat.

"That's great, I'll be relying on you then!"

Hearing that the matter could be settled in three days, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief and nodded.

"Physician Bai, feel free to stay here for the time being. I'll go and urge them right now."

The Great Herb King stood up and called for a guard, arranging for the duo's accommodation before heading out in a rush.

It was a request from his benefactor, he didn't dare to dawdle.

"We'll stay here for the time being then!"

Zhang Xuan knew that there was no rushing the issue. Thus, he decided to stay in the manor with Mo Yu for the time being.

....

"Do you think that the fellow's diagnosis is correct?"

Outside the Great Herb King Manor, the numerous physicians who left earlier were gathered together. Every single one of them had a deep frown on their foreheads.

Ever since they departed from the manor, they had been keeping vigil outside discussing Physician Bai.

For 2-star and 3-star physicians with astounding reputations to be outdone by an unimpressive 1-star physician, they found the matter hard to accept.

"Do you think that a mere 1-star physician can make an accurate diagnosis on the Great Herb King? What a joke! He was probably just spouting bullshit!"

"That might not be the case, his words have generated a huge reaction in the Great Herb King. Why else would the Great Herb King get so agitated if the other party's words aren't right?"

"Assuming that he is right, then what in the world is that [Contract Gu]? Why haven't we heard of it?"

The more they discussed, the more confused they got.

If this fellow was spouting rubbish, it is impossible for the Great Herb King to have such an intense reaction, even causing him to drive us away.

But if what he said is true, then what in the world is a Contract Gu? Why haven't we heard of it?

Is there such an illness in the world?

Besides.... How can a 1-star physician notice something that we couldn't discern?

"I've known Bai Chan for several years, but I never knew that he has such abilities!"

Of the crowd, Physician Cheng Feng felt so stifled that he was about to lose it.

He was the most familiar with Physician Bai Chan, and his original intention was to mock the other party and embarrass him. He didn't expect the other party to outdo him and slap him hard so on the face.

"There's no need for us to debate. Our questions will be answered soon enough!"

"If he had indeed diagnosed the condition of the Great Herb King successfully, he would be to strut out of the manor openly. Otherwise, the only fate that awaits him is to become a corpse!"

Mu Hong and the other 3-star physicians interrupted the crowd's discussion.

"That's right!"

Everyone nodded in agreement.

That arrogant fellow had overstepped his boundaries, knocking out the Great Herb King with a single fist. It was one thing if he could treat him, but if he failed, he would definitely be killed.

Knowing this, the others decided not to make a fuss. If that fellow were to walk out, it

would simply mean that his diagnosis was spot on. On the other hand, if he were to be carried out, it would mean that he was spouting nonsense and had paid for his arrogance.

"There's no need to think about it, he will definitely be carried out...."

Physician Cheng Feng gritted his teeth. However, before he could finish his words, 'jiya!', the doors to the manor opened.

"Look, someone is coming out...."

Upon hearing the loud creaking, the physicians turned toward the door and with just a single glance, all of their eyes widened, and they nearly passed out.

The one who walked out was an elder, and Butler Lu followed behind him respectfully.

"Is he.... the Great Herb King?"

After getting a clear view of his appearance, every physician present swallowed a mouthful of saliva simultaneously.

They had examined the other party for an extended period of time, so how could they not recognize him!

Even though he looked so much younger, given how Butler Lu was acting respectfully to him, who else could he be?

Just a moment ago, the other party was lying motionless on the reclining chair and was on the verge of death.... And in less than twenty minutes, he is now walking with large strides. His movements are filled with vitality, and he now looks several decades younger....

Can anyone tell me what happened?

Even if the other party's diagnosis was spot on, it isn't possible for the treatment to be so quick, right?

To be fully treated in twenty minutes.... and for him to walk about without assistance....

The heck, my eyes must be playing tricks on me!

"This...."

Physician Cheng Feng's body swayed, and he nearly vomited blood.

He had just mentioned that the other party would definitely be lifted out and, instead, it turned out that.... the Great Herb King came out on his own two feet.

Can anyone tell me what's going on?

"Distinguished physicians, you're still here?"

Seeing that the crowd had not yet left, the Great Herb King walked over with a smile.

"Great Herb King, this...."

Physician Mu Hong could no longer hold himself back, and he walked forward with a bewildered expression.

"Physician Bai Chan has treated my affliction. His medical skills are incredible!"

A hint of reverence flashed across the Great Herb King's eyes. Then, he clasped his hands and said, "Alright, I still have affairs to attend to, so I will not hold you up. Farewell!"

After which, he walked away with light footsteps.

"Was it really Physician Bai Chan who treated him?"

"In less than twenty minutes, he returned a person who looked to be in his nineties to his fifties?"

Even though they had guessed so the moment they saw the Great Herb King, they could not help but feel faint-headed upon hearing his personal affirmation.

There were so many of them and they had spent a significant amount of time examining the other party but weren't able to identify his illness. Yet, Physician Bai Chan was able to treat him in such a short period of time.... The difference in their standards was clear.

Is he really a 1-star physician?

"Looks like.... we have all misjudged him. That Physician Bai Chan is probably not just a 1-star physician!"

After a long moment of silence, one of the 3-star physicians spoke up.

The emblem isn't representative of one's true abilities.

"Indeed. How can a 1-star physician treat the Great Herb King so easily.... With his skills, he is probably at minimum a 4-star!" Another 3-star physician commented.

Even though he was unwilling to admit it, Physician Mu Hong nodded in agreement.

"4-star physician.... When he comes out, I'll have to pay my proper respects and make up for my impertinence!"

"That's right. I would like to consult him as well...."

Upon hearing the three 3-star physicians' judgment, everyone's faces froze.

Back then, when they were in the lounge, they had mocked Physician Bai without restraint.

Now that they knew that he was likely to be an incredible 4-star physician, they started to panic.

"Damn it, don't let me see you. Otherwise, I will beat you to death...."

Just as everyone made up their minds, a furious bellow sounded from the manor. Turning around, they saw a fellow who wasn't even wearing a coat in this cold weather standing not too far away, shaking his fists angrily.

"Physician Bai Chan?"

Obtaining a clear view of his appearance, all of the physicians were dazed for a moment. After which, a gleam appeared in their eyes, and they dashed forward.

The pitiful Physician Bai had just regained his consciousness and he realized that his physician emblem and coat had gone missing. Thus, he howled furiously and was

about to search for the culprit when he saw a mob of 2-star and 3-star physicians charging toward him, as though they had seen their idol.

Frightened, he clamped his bottom and his body went limp....

These fellows usually act so haughtily upon seeing me, disregarding my presence. Why would they be bowing to me as though they had seen their senior?

Can anyone tell me....

What the heck is going on?

Chapter 274

Half-Zongshi

"Physician Cheng Feng, this.... What's going on?"

It took Physician Bai Chan a moment before he recovered. Upon recognizing a familiar face, he asked hastily.

"Physician Bai, I was blind to not notice your greatness, to think that your medical skills have reached such an astounding levels in just a few years. I hope that you can forgive me for the times that I've offended you!"

With a reddened face, Physician Cheng Feng clasped his hands respectfully.

"...."

Countless question marks popped in Physician Bai Chan's head.

Did these fellows eat something wrong this morning?

Why have all of their attitudes changed after I fainted?

After a moment of doubt, the confused Physician Bai finally understood the situation. The fellow who stole his emblem seemed to have treated the Great Herb King under his identity.

Despite knocking him out, that fellow didn't take his money or his possessions. In fact, he even bought him medicinal herbs that were worth thirty thousand gold taels.... All of these, just to help treat someone?

Why does this feel so suspicious?

How can there be such a good thing in this world....

If that's really the case, shouldn't I consider finding another remote alley to loiter in?

Shouldn't I beg the heavens to show mercy and bring me a few more robbers like him....

....

Zhang Xuan was oblivious to Physician Bai Chan's earnest pleas. In the past three days, he had been staying in the Great Herb King Manor. Other than reading through the books in the Library of Heaven's Path, he spent most of his time tutoring Mo Yu.

This was what he had promised her. Now that he had managed to convince the Great Herb King to help him, it was time for him to fulfill his end of the promise.

After a few days of tutelage under Zhang Xuan, Mo Yu was completely impressed with the capability of the man who was even younger than her.

Her apothecary teacher was a famous figure in Tianwu Kingdom, but in terms of imparting knowledge, his ability to identify crucial points and mistakes was nowhere near Zhang Xuan's.

In just three days, her pill forging skills had made a huge leap. At this moment, she was already capable of forging a grade-2 pill independently.

And being able to forge a grade-2 pill meant that she could take the 2-star apothecary examination. To be able to reach such a standard with just three days of tutoring, even until now, Mo Yu could not believe that this was indeed reality.

Under normal circumstances, without at least five to six years of hard work, it is impossible for one to advance from a 1-star apothecary to a 2-star.

"Physician Bai, we've gathered all of the books that you require!"

On the morning of the fourth day, Zhang Xuan was guiding Mo Yu as usual when the Great Herb King walked in.

"Let's go and take a look!"

Zhang Xuan stood up.

He had been staying in the manor for the past three days for this, and he was glad that the other party didn't let him down.

"This way!"

The Great Herb King led the way, and soon they arrived at a huge room. Books of all appearance filled the interior, and with a glance at the outermost row, they were verified to be indeed Half-Zongshi and Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals.

"I'll take a look, you can all leave first!"

Aware that his reading method was beyond unorthodox, Zhang Xuan waved them away.

"Yes!"

The moment the Great Herb King and Butler Lu stepped out of the room, they heard hurried footsteps from within, and it seemed to them that someone was running in the room.

Didn't he ask us to gather these books here so that he can browse through them?

Running?

The duo stared at one another in puzzlement.

"Physician Bai is an extraordinary expert, so it's not surprising for him to have extraordinary methods of doing things. It would be best for us.... to leave him be!"

Suppressing the urge to peek inside, the Great Herb King shook his head.

Other physicians would observe and ask the patient numerous questions in order to confirm their diagnosis.... Yet, this fellow does so by knocking the patient out!

The other physicians usually demand medicinal herbs and gold coins in return for treating others, but this fellow requested cultivation techniques that were regardless of tier....

'Being gluttonous just results in indigestion', this was a principle that everyone knew. Furthermore, cultivators could only practice a single cultivation technique, so they couldn't understand why Zhang Xuan required so many books.

For the past three days, this question had been plaguing their minds. They had come

up with dozens of reasons, but none of them seemed viable.

They thought that they would be able to guess the other party's intention by observing his actions, yet all they got was the sound of running....

Since they've brought the books here, the other party should at least browse through them and learn!

Yet, he was running about in the room....

They knew that experts usually do things peculiarly, but.... this was way too peculiar!

"Old master, what do we do now?"

They stood outside the room for a long while, but other than the sound of hurried footsteps, their ears failed to catch anything else. Finally, Butler Lu couldn't stand it anymore and asked, "Should we.... run with him as well?"

"There's no need, we'll just wait outside. He should come out once he's done!"

Shaking his head, the Great Herb King was just about to continue speaking when, 'jiya!', doors opened and Physician Bai walked out.

"That.... Physician Bai, is something wrong with the manuals?"

Seeing the other party walk out of the room, the Great Herb King was astonished. He was unable to comprehend the situation at all.

Zhang Xuan had specially demanded these cultivation technique manuals, so the Great Herb King thought that he would at least immerse himself in them for a day or two. Why would he be out.... right after running for a while in the room?"

He shouldn't be able to finish more than a handful of books in such a short period of time, right?

"I'm done looking through them!"

Zhang Xuan nodded.

"If there's anything wrong with the books, I can think of another way.... Ah? What did

you say? You fi-fi-finished reading all of them?"

The bodies of the Great Herb King and Butler Lu staggered, and they nearly vomited blood.

It took us so much effort to gather more than a thousand books. You've barely entered for a few minutes.... and you say that you're done reading through them?

All we've heard was the sound of you running in the room, when did you read those books?

"Un, those books were extremely helpful to me. Thank you!"

Ignoring the shock on their faces, Zhang Xuan nodded.

There were just a thousand plus books inside, and it only took a few moments for Zhang Xuan to finish touching all of them. In fact, the reason why he took a few minutes was that he was busy breaking through Half-Zongshi, which took up some time. Otherwise, he would have probably finished 'reading' through them even before the other party walked out the door.

Of the books which the Great Herb King gathered, there were more on Half-Zongshi, and Zhang Xuan was able to form a complete Heaven's Path Divine Art, so he practiced his cultivation on the spot.

Half-Zongshi was merely a transition phase to Zongshi realm. With the correct cultivation technique, Zhang Xuan was able to improve swiftly. In just a few minutes, he managed to reach Half-Zongshi and reinforced his cultivation.

On the other hand, the Great Herb King had only gathered seven hundred to eight hundred of Zongshi realm cultivation technique manuals, so Zhang Xuan was still lacking a little more to forming the complete cultivation technique. Thus, he stopped at Half-Zongshi.

Upon reaching Half-Zongshi, Zhang Xuan's strength increased immensely. He broke through the 1000 ding barrier and reached 1500 ding.

At Zongshi realm, a cultivator usually possesses 1000 ding at primary stage, 2000 ding at intermediate stage, 3000 ding at advanced stage, and 4000 ding at pinnacle!

Possessing 1500 ding, Zhang Xuan's strength had already surpassed that of Zongshi realm primary stage cultivators despite being a Half-Zongshi.

More importantly.... Other people took several years, some even decades, to reach Half-Zongshi realm, yet he.... only took a few minutes!

It was fortunate that the Heaven's Path zhenqi was pure, making it impossible for anyone to see through his cultivation. Otherwise, if the Great Herb King were to know that Zhang Xuan's cultivation made a tremendous leap in the few minutes that he was inside the room, he would definitely cry on the spot.

One has to know that he had eaten countless medicinal herbs back then to reach Half-Zongshi. If one were to equate it to money, it was already more than sufficient for one to buy an entire city.

He had to spend so many resources in order to achieve a breakthrough, yet this 'Physician Bai' succeeded just by running around the room for a moment....

Even the world's greatest genius would blush furiously before Zhang Xuan.

"Don't worry about it, this is something that I should do!"

Suppressing the urge to tug out his hair, the Great Herb King asked, "Physician Bai, so.... what do we do now? Are you still determined to head to the Poison Hall?"

"Of course I am!"

Zhang Xuan smiled. "Not only so, we'll also walk through their doors proudly!"

"Proudly?"

"That's right!" Zhang Xuan nodded. "Didn't you say that the headquarter has already been informed of the old Hall Master's death?"

"Un! Just that, it's hard to tell whether the headquarter would send an envoy. If they do send one, the chaos should be quenched swiftly, and that would spare us from danger!" The Great Herb King said. "Otherwise.... It would be troublesome."

"I have a plan in mind! Rather than waiting here for an envoy who might not even come, why not we.... make an envoy ourselves!"

Zhang Xuan said.

"Make an envoy?" The Great Herb King was confused.

"It's simple. You'll bring me to the Poison Hall claiming that I'm the envoy! In any case, none of them has seen the envoy before, so I doubt that they'll be able to tell that I'm a fake."

In the past three days, Zhang Xuan gave this matter much thought. Rather than waiting here, he might as well take the initiative.

Since an internal conflict had broken out in the Poison Hall and it was dangerous to enter, why not he make an envoy himself to quench the conflict.... After all, no matter how much they want the seat of the Hall Master, they wouldn't dare to lay their hands on an envoy of the headquarter.

On top of that, they didn't know who the headquarter would send!

Thus, why couldn't he pass off as the envoy?

In any case, his main motive was to get his hands on the books. He could leave right after duplicating them in the library, and even if someone were to notice that he was a fake after that, he would have been long gone.

He has already impersonated as a master teacher before, an envoy of the Poison Hall shouldn't be much of a problem.

"You want to pass off.... as the envoy?"

The Great Herb King's face paled, and his body trembled in fear.

Brother, I'm already old and my heart is weak.... Are you sure you aren't pulling my leg?

Impersonating the envoy wasn't a joke. If someone were to notice a flaw in their disguise, they would be beaten to death on the spot!

"Un! Make some preparations, we'll set out now. You've already promised me that you'll bring me to the Poison Hall. Surely you aren't thinking of going back on your words, are you?"

Zhang Xuan glanced at the Great Herb King with a frown. "If you're afraid, you only have to bring me to the Poison Hall. You don't have to follow me in!"

"I...."

This isn't a problem of being afraid or going to the Poison Hall....

If your impersonation of the envoy were to be exposed, even dying a thousand times wouldn't be sufficient to make up for our sins!

I was just pulled back from the hands of the grim reaper, and now, you are expecting me to leap into a valley of flames....

If I knew that this was the intention you have in mind, I would never have agreed to your condition!

Is it too late.... to take back my words?

The face of the Great Herb King twitched. This time, he really burst into tears.

Chapter 275

Entering the Poison Hall

Wuuuuuu wuuuuuuu!

The gale in the Red Lotus Range felt like knives stabbing into one's skin. The monotonous light red scenery made one's eyes hurt, and one couldn't help but feel fatigued.

From time to time, a worm around the size of a fingernail would appear in the path ahead. Wet and fetid, the sight of it left one nauseated.

"This is the Humid Worm, an animal unique to the habitat of the Red Lotus Range. It feeds on medicinal herbs, and it is the greatest nemesis of medicinal herb plantations. However, the bizarre thing is that its corpse is a great nutrient for medicinal herbs. Medicinal herbs grown using the corpse of the Humid Worm as fertilizer possess incredible spiritual energy and a lustrous appearance. Many plants that can't be cultivated here grow easily to great heights with Humid Worm fertilizer. It is the main reason why the Red Lotus City is able to become the greatest medicinal herbs trading hub in the thirteen surrounding kingdoms!"

In the depths of the lotus-shaped mountain range, two figures could be seen treading forward. Noticing the worms crawling about the surface, one of them explained.

"No wonder. I've been thinking why the Red Lotus City, despite being in such a remote location with an environment unsuitable for the growth of herbs, would become the trading hub of medicinal herbs."

The second person nodded in agreement. Proceeding forward, he glanced upward and saw a layer of mist shielding the rays of the sun, then asked, "Is this the poison mist you spoke of?"

The duo was Zhang Xuan and Great Herb King, who had left the Red Lotus City for the Poison Hall.

As the Poison Hall was in a state of chaos and filled with dangers, Zhang Xuan didn't

bring Mo Yu along. Instead, he had her return to the Tianwu Royal City.

The Great Herb King was also conflicted for a period of time before deciding to bring Zhang Xuan to the Poison Hall.

The other party was his benefactor, and since he had agreed to his request, it wasn't appropriate for him to go back on his words.

It had been five days since the start of their journey.

"That's right! A huge volcano lies under the Red Lotus Range, causing the surface to be torrid. That's the reason why there is no greenery in the region, and all of the rocks are red in color. Within the hot gas, a several hundred meters thick poison mist lingers around the area dozens of meter above the surface. While it is possible for one to fly over the region on an aerial savage beast, it would be impossible for them to land in the Red Lotus Range. Even for a Zongshi realm savage beast, if it were to come into contact with the poison mist, it wouldn't be able to last for a moment before it dies from excessive bleeding from its seven apertures!"

The Great Herb King explained.

"Thus, one can only enter the area via walking! This is also the reason why the Poison Hall is able to remain unscathed in the Red Lotus Range, safe from extermination by those supposed warriors of justice."

The Poison Hall crafted poison for sale, and given the sinister nature of its business, it was unavoidable that it would offend many different people. While it was partly due to the support of the powerful headquarter that it was able to remain standing after several millennia, the main factors were its secretive location and the veil of the poison mist.

In the first place, it was almost impossible for anyone to find the Poison Hall amidst the vast mountain range. Besides, even if one were to find it, it was inaccessible via aerial savage beasts and no one could pose a threat.

"Impressive." Zhang Xuan nodded.

It was no wonder why no one was able to find the Poison Hall, and many even doubted its existence. With the cloak of the poison mist, even if one knew of its existence, no more than a handful would be able to find it.

On top of that, the poison mist stuck close to the earth at certain spots. If not for the Great Herb King knowing the way, the duo would have long walked into them and become lethally poisoned.

It could even be said that it is impossible to find the Poison Hall without someone's lead.

Zhang Xuan had heard that most of those who tried to look for the Poison Hall by themselves end up dead, and from the looks of it, it seemed that it wasn't just a rumor.

It was fortunate that Mo Yu had brought him to the Great Herb King and that he didn't come running over here all by himself.

Otherwise, even though his Heaven's Path zhenqi allowed him to expel some of the poisonous air which he inhaled, too much of it would pose a huge problem.

"How far are we from the Poison Hall?"

Looking into the distance, the mountain range extended toward the horizon, and not a single infrastructure or silhouette could be seen. Unable to hold himself back, Zhang Xuan asked.

We have traveled for five days but have yet to arrive at our destination. Isn't the Poison Hall way too far?

"We're reaching soon, it's right in front!" The Great Herb King pointed forward.

"In front?" Zhang Xuan felt perplexed.

Other than a few stones here and there, there was nothing in sight. How could the Poison Hall be hiding here?

"Follow me!"

Chuckling, the Great Herb King led the way. After circling around a gigantic boulder and a slope, a valley appeared before their eyes.

Lowering his head to glancing at the bottom of the valley, a look of astonishment appeared on Zhang Xuan's face.

A huge city sat within the valley.

The infrastructure was built according to the gradient of the ground, and most of them had ancient designs, similar to those found in Red Lotus City. With a single glance, one could tell that the building had been standing for countless years.

"Is this the Poison Hall?"

The city of the Poison Hall was in no way inferior to that of the Beast Hall. The sight of the bright green buildings in the crimson valley looked like a scene right out of a beautiful painting.

"It's said that when the Poison Hall was built, the founder specially invited a formation master to set up a concealing formation with the mountain range as its core. If one doesn't follow the specific path in, he won't be able to see the city even if he is standing right before it."

The Great Herb King explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded.

That was indeed the case.

All he could see before was merely the endless towering mountains, but after circling around a few boulders and a slope, this gigantic city appeared before him immediately. With such a majestic city hidden in plain view, even if someone told him that there wasn't a concealing formation present, he would never believe it.

"Physician Bai, the Poison Hall is right before us, but do you intend to go in just like that?"

The Great Herb King inquired once again.

Recalling the other party's intentions, he felt nervous.

Honestly speaking, it was true that no one had met the envoy from the Poison Hall headquarter, but.... certain doom would await them if they were exposed.

"Un, my current identity is a physician, so it is possible that someone might recognize me.... I have to make some changes!"

Zhang Xuan was still in Bai Chan's guise at the moment. There were several poison masters in the Poison Hall who often traveled out of the mountain range, so it was possible that someone might recognize him. Thus, he decided that it was better to play safe.

Gege! Utilizing his disguise art, the muscles and bones in his entire body creaked. In a few short moments, his looks and height had changed completely. Looking at him once more, he had already become a middle-aged man in his forties.

After which, he changed into a set of grayish-green clothes which he had prepared beforehand. At this moment, Zhang Xuan had morphed into an entirely different person, and there was not a single similarity between him and the previous Bai Chan or his original appearance. Putting aside the Great Herb King, even if Zhao Ya and the others were here, it would be impossible for them to guess that the person standing before them was their teacher.

Assuming an identity someone knew was difficult, but impersonating a person who has never appeared was simple.

"Is this.... the art of disguise?"

The Great Herb King trembled.

He didn't expect Zhang Xuan to possess such an ability.

At this moment, he finally understood why Physician Bai dared to impersonate the envoy. It was because he had the skills to carry it out.

Just that.... Others may not be able to recognize you once you take off your disguise, but what about me?

I am the Great Herb King of the Red Lotus City! I might be able to run, but I'll have to abandon the empire that I have built up.

Once they realize that I brought a fake envoy here, even if I were able to escape now, I will definitely be captured again. I will then be chopped into countless pieces and made into meat sauce.

Initially, he thought that the both of them would be sharing the danger, but it turned out that his partner-in-crime didn't even intend to reveal his true appearance. Even if

the Poison Hall tried to pursue the matter, it would be impossible for them to find Physician Bai....

This meant that he would have to bear the brunt of Physician Bai's actions.

Upon understanding this, the face of the Great Herb King twisted in agony.

"Don't worry, when we enter the Poison Hall later, you can mention that I am the one who looked for you, claiming that I'm the envoy from the headquarter, and unable to ascertain the fact, you decided to bring me over. This way, you will be able to steer clear of any blame. As for the Contract Gu planted in you, you can say that I'm the one who treated you in compensation for you to bring me here."

Seeing through the other party's thoughts, Zhang Xuan said.

"This...."

The face of the Great Herb King reddened.

He didn't expect for the other party to have already thought of an excuse for him. He has truly misjudged the other party!

The excuse that the other party gave him was indeed flawless.

He wasn't someone from the Poison Hall, so it was natural that he wouldn't be able to identify the envoy. In fact, if the personnel in the Poison Hall were blind enough so as to not notice the fake envoy as well, it would be difficult for them to fault him.

Besides, even though the Contract Gu between the Great Herb King and the Hall Master was a confidential matter, the top echelon of the Poison Hall was aware of this matter. Now that the Hall Master was dead, being alive and kicking, he would incur their suspicions if he did not give a convincing reason.

These few words easily solved the impending problem that he would face, avoiding anyone's doubts and, thus, any harm. It was truly a perfect excuse.

Just that....

"If I were to do that, they will definitely direct their doubts to you...." The Great Herb King hesitated for a moment before asking, "How much does Physician Bai know

about poison masters?"

If the Great Herb King were to speak according to Physician Bai's recommendation, he would be free from trouble. However, this would plunge the other party into greater danger.

The personnel of the Poison Hall would definitely try all means to ascertain his identity. It was one thing if Zhang Xuan had an in-depth understanding of poison masters, but if there were any lapse in his disguise, it would be extremely easy to give himself away.

"I've only heard of this occupation half a month ago!" Zhang Xuan said.

"You've only heard of it.... half a month ago?"

The Great Herb King's eyes rolled to the back, and he nearly spurted a mouthful of blood.

Brother, are you playing with me?

You don't even know what a poison master is half a month ago, yet you dare to pass off as an envoy of the Poison Hall headquarter....

"Indeed!"

"You don't have the poison master emblem or token of identification from the headquarter since you're passing off as the envoy. To win the other party's trust, you will have to display your poison techniques. But if you know nothing at all...."

Seeing the other party nod his head so casually, the Great Herb King felt a stifling sensation in his chest.

If you have an identification token or a high-tier poison master emblem, other people might buy your story.

And without these, if you were to display extraordinary skills, you might be able to convince them as well....

But you've only heard of poison masters half a month ago. Despite knowing nothing at all, you dare to pass off as an envoy. Are you really that courageous, or do you not

understand the risks involved?

This isn't playing house. If the other party were to see through your disguise, you'll really get killed!

"It's not a problem, I'll just adapt to the situation then!"

Knowing what the other party was worried about, Zhang Xuan waved casually.

"Alright, since we're already here, there's no point thinking too much. Let's go!"

Even though Zhang Xuan didn't know much about poison masters, he possessed the Library of Heaven's Path. Since he was even able to pass off as a master teacher, it shouldn't be a challenge for him to impersonate a formidable poison master.

"...."

Seeing the unconcerned look on the other party's face, the Great Herb King felt something within him crumble. The confidence, which had just sprouted within him, vanished without a trace.

He truly had no idea how this fellow could remain so confident.

Even so, they were already here and did not have any other options. All they could do now was to take one step at a time.

Walking down the passageway toward the valley, they soon arrived at the city.

"Who dares to intrude the Poison Hall?"

Before walking through the gates into the city, a bellow roared. A few black-robed middle-aged men rushed out, and every single one of them stared at Zhang Xuan and the Great Herb King with cold eyes, as though eagles staring down their preys.

"Poison Master Zhou, Poison Master Liu, and the others, it's me!"

Taking a step forward, the Great Herb King said hastily.

"Oh? The Great Herb King? What are you doing here instead of staying in the Red Lotus City?" The middle-aged man known as Poison Master Zhou narrowed his eyes.

"In this situation right now, others would be trying their best to stay away, yet you came here on your own accord. Are you tired of living?" Poison Master Liu harrumphed.

With the Poison Hall in chaos and every man for himself, to come here was no different from courting death.

The two men who spoke were acquainted with the Great Herb King. They had accepted quite some precious treasures from him, so naturally, they spoke with his welfare at heart.

"I am here to look for the three Vice Hall Masters...."

Knowing that the other party bore goodwill, the Great Herb King was just about to explain the situation to them when a poison master walked up to Zhang Xuan.

"Who's this? Don't you know that it is capital punishment for one to casually bring anyone in without permission?"

Killing intent flashed in the poison master's eyes as he gazed at Zhang Xuan. "Outsider, it's your honor to die under the poison that I've just created! Blame it on your own misfortune if you must."

"Wait, he is...."

Seeing that the other party was about to make a move, the Great Herb King immediately panicked. He was about to say that he was the envoy from the headquarter when the 'Physician Bai' before him raised his leg and sent a kick at the poison master.

Peng!

Before the poison master, who was going to kill Zhang Xuan, could react, he was already sent flying, and he crashed heavily into the city wall. His neck bent at an unnatural angle from the impact, and he breathed his last.

"What?"

"Atrocious!"

Not expecting this trespasser to make a move on them, Poison Master Zhou, Poison Master Liu, and the others burst into anger immediately. Their killing intent flurried as they surrounded the duo.

"We're doomed...."

Without an emblem or knowledge to prove that he was a poison master, the Great Herb King was thinking that it would be best for Physician Bai to keep a low profile and slowly earn their trust.

Yet, he killed a poison master the moment he arrived....

Brother, are you in such a rush to head to the underworld?

Taking in the situation, the Great Herb King's body trembled in agitation. He could no longer hold back the tears welling up in his eyes.

The heck, why do others have god-like teammates....

While all I have is this.... suicide bomber!

Seven apertures: Refers to the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and mouth.

Chapter 276

Golden Poison Heart Token

"Have your Vice Hall Masters and elder come out to meet me!"

Despite being surrounded by a large group of poison masters, Zhang Xuan wasn't flustered at all. Rather, as if he didn't notice the situation, he raised his chin, placed his hands behind his back, and stared at the group with frosty eyes.

"You wish to meet our Vice Hall Masters and elders? Who do you think you are!"

To think that the fellow would fearlessly demand to meet their Vice Hall Master and elders after having attacked their colleague! Infuriated, Poison Master Zhou roared savagely, "To dare to kill in the Poison Hall, you shall become dead meat...."

Harrumphing coldly, he had decided to make his move in order to teach this arrogant fellow a lesson. But at the next moment, the vision before him blurred.

Hu!

In the flash of a shadow, a hand was already grabbing at Poison Master Zhou's neck and he was held dangling in midair.

"Yo-you...." Poison Master Zhou trembled in fear. The middle-aged man who was ten meters away from him had appeared right before him all of a sudden.

His face paled with every passing second, and through gritted teeth, he spat, "Let go of me! Otherwise, you don't have to dream of leaving here alive...."

"This is the Poison Hall, not a place for you to behave atrociously!"

Poison Liu and the others didn't expect the fellow who came with the Great Herb King to be so arrogant, attacking them the moment there was a verbal conflict. Feeling incensed, they roared angrily.

Even though the Poison Hall was located in such a remote region, it was an entity

which struck fear into the hearts of countless powers. Yet, for an outsider to rush in and kill their men.... Who gave him the guts to do so?

Disregarding their furious roars, Zhang Xuan remained grabbing Poison Master Zhou's neck with an indifferent expression. At the same time, he whipped him with his other hand.

Pah pah pah pah!

Four consecutive sounds echoed crisply in the air. Poison Master Zhou's face swelled up immediately, and fresh blood spilled from the corners of his lips. Several of his teeth also fell to the floor.

"This is your punishment for being disrespectful toward me!"

After smacking him, Zhang Xuan casually threw the other party onto the floor. Then, placing his hands behind his back once more, he stood proudly with the aura of a conqueror. "There's a limit to my patience. Don't make me angry, I don't mind wasting a bit of my time to destroy this useless branch of yours!"

"Destroy this useless branch...."

The Great Herb King felt his vision turn dark.

Destroying this branch....

Physician Bai, do you know how many Zongshi realm experts there are in the Poison Hall?

With just the strength of us both.... We probably won't even reach the elders before we are beaten to death. Furthermore, this is assuming if the other party didn't use their poison on us....

Even though the Great Herb King felt stifled, he understood Physician Bai's intentions.

Since the other party is playing as the envoy of the headquarter, he has to have the disposition of one as well.

How can an expert from the headquarter allow himself to be bullied by the poison masters from a branch? If he didn't dare to retaliate, no matter what he says later, no

one would believe his words.

Thus.... It is vital for him to instill fear among them!

He has to make everyone in the Poison Hall know that.... the envoy is here!

This way, he can establish his standing rapidly. However.... if he shows an opening and gives himself in, he will die tragically.

The Great Herb King felt his legs tremble with fear.

As the dominant power in Red Lotus City, he wasn't an amateur in such matters. Even so, when he recalled how the Poison Hall dealt with their enemies, a cold chill went down his spine immediately, and he found himself unable to remain calm.

"You...."

Upon hearing those words, no matter how foolish Poison Master Liu and the others could be, it was clear that the person before them wasn't a simple figure. Otherwise, he wouldn't dare to act so arrogantly in the Poison Hall. After a moment of hesitation, he asked, "May I ask.... how I should address you?"

Zhang Xuan stood quietly on the spot, as though he were saying that these small fries weren't worthy of his words.

Seeing Physician Bai act in such a manner, the Great Herb King could only muster his courage, step forward, stabilize his breathing as far as he can, and say, "This.... This is.... the envoy sent by the headquarter!"

"Envoy?"

The expressions on Poison Master Liu and the others' faces darkened immediately.

They knew that the elders had requested for an envoy from the headquarter to quench the inner conflict, but they didn't think that the headquarter would really send a person over!

It was no wonder why the other party acted so arrogantly, attacking them the moment there was a conflict without any regards to the possible consequences.

If the other party was really an envoy from the headquarter, he did have the qualifications to do so.

"Since you're the envoy.... do you have the Golden Poison Heart Token from the headquarter?"

Steadying his breathing, Poison Master Liu stepped forward.

The Golden Poison Heart Token was the identity token the headquarter issued to their envoys, and only with this would the envoys be recognized. In a sense, it was similar to a Sword of state, and it represented the headquarter, as well as its full authority.

Upon hearing the question, the Great Herb King clenched his fists.

This Physician Bai is a fake, how can he possibly have the Golden Poison Heart Token!

However, if he doesn't produce it, the other party will definitely not believe him....

The Great Herb King tried to think of several excuses, such as having lost it along the way or having forgotten to bring it along.... However, all of them didn't seem feasible.

How can an envoy of the Poison Hall lose his Golden Poison Heart Token? It is equivalent to an ambassador losing the Sword of state, and this is equivalent to courting death!

No matter how foolish one is, such a thing would appear implausible!

Worried, he turned to Physician Bai to see how he would resolve the issue. However, what he saw was Physician Bai glaring at the crowd through narrowed eyes, and exuding an intimidating aura which left all of them breathless.

"Who do you think you are?"

Harrumphing coldly, Zhang Xuan commanded authoritatively, "Have your Vice Hall Masters and elders meet me!"

"I...."

Poison Master Liu's face flushed in anger.

He was a respected and feared figure no matter where he went ever since he became a poison master. This was the first time someone was criticizing him right in his face!

However, he also knew that if the other party was truly an envoy, he was likely to be at least a 4-star poison master. Before such a figure, he was no different from a nobody.

"What's wrong?"

Just as Poison Master Liu was conflicted over whether he should report this matter to the Vice Hall Masters and the others, a cold voice sounded. Then, an elder walked over with widened strides.

"Elder Blackeye...."

Upon seeing the elder, Poison Master Liu clasped his fist immediately.

The person who came was the Fourth Elder of the Poison Hall, Blackeye.

The eyes of this Fourth Elder were completely black, devoid of the white pupils ordinary humans possessed. From afar, he looked like a horrifying demon. Rumors have it that he accidentally poisoned his eyes in the midst of concocting poison, resulting in his current state. Since then, he had been reputed after his black eyes, and his original name was gradually forgotten.

It was a known fact in the Poison Hall that this Elder Blackeye was in charge of executing punishments, and he was the most ruthless and merciless poison master here.

Usually, when they see this elder, they would experience fear and run away as far as they could out of instinct. But at this moment, they felt as though they had found their backing, and they heaved a sigh of relief.

"Reporting to Elder Blackeye, this.... elder was brought here by the Great Herb King, and he says that he is the envoy sent by the headquarter...."

Stepping forward, Poison Master Liu explained.

"Envoy?"

Frowning, Elder Blackeye stared at the middle-aged man before him.

Despite knowing that the other party was looking at him, Zhang Xuan ignored him and continued to gaze forward with indifferent eyes.

"The envoys sent by the headquarter can be classified as red, white, gold, and green.... May I ask which of the four you are?"

After hesitating for a moment, Blackeye clasped his fist.

As an elder, he knew about the authority an envoy wielded. Thus, he didn't act as rashly as Poison Master Zhou and the others did.

Thus, he adjusted his initial attitude.

"Red, white, gold, and green? Are there different types of envoys?"

Gedeng! The heart of the Great Herb King leaped.

He knew that the Poison Hall headquarters could send an envoy to the branch, but he didn't know that there were different tiers to the envoys. Naturally, Physician Bai was ignorant of the matter as well.

At the same time, it was possible to be a trap prepared by the six elders. If Physician Bai were to answer with any of the four options, the other party would be able to ascertain that he was a fake, and he would be killed in an instant.

Nervous, the Great Herb King turned his eyes toward Physician Bai once more.

He knew that passing off as a special envoy would be difficult, but he didn't think that it would be so nerve-wracking!

If his heart were slightly weaker, he might really be scared to death.

"Are you a Vice Hall Master of this branch?"

Disregarding the anxious Great Herb King and the other party's question, Zhang Xuan asked.

"I.... am not!" Elder Blackeye was stunned. "I am just the Fourth Elder...."

"If you aren't, who gave you the right to be spouting nonsense here?" Zhang Xuan's

complexion darkened.

"I...."

Elder Blackeye was at a loss for words.

"Is it because the previous envoys were too kind that you have all grown spoilt? Do you think that you're qualified to ask about the matters of the headquarter?"

Flinging his sleeves, Zhang Xuan's expression was frosty, "How dare a poison master of an insignificant branch question me! Who gave you the guts to do so!"

"I...."

Elder Blackeye's breathing hastened. It seemed as if a storm was brewing within his pitch-black eyes. After a moment, he held himself back and replied, "I dare not. I will call the Vice Hall Masters and the Grand Elder over now to welcome the envoy!"

After which, he walked back into the city.

"Elder Blackeye...."

Seeing the cold and unfeeling Fourth Elder being yelled at in public and leaving without daring to refute at all, Poison Master Zhou, Poison Master Liu, and the others shuddered.

They turned to look at Zhang Xuan again, and awe reflected in their eyes.

"Un!"

Sensing the change in their attitudes, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

From his experience of passing off as a master teacher, he knew that the key to convincing others was to maintain a powerful front!

A moment later, just as Poison Master Liu and the others were about to crumble from the pressure, a few figures walked over.

They were the three Vice Hall Masters, the Grand Elder, and a few other top personnel of the Poison Hall.

The old Hall Master had accepted a total of three disciples, and they were these three Vice Hall Masters.

They were all 2-star poison masters and Zongshi realm pinnacle experts.

Each of the three had been managing a portion of the Poison Hall for many years now, and they had already built a following for themselves. At present, they were on equal footing.

This was also the reason why the fight for the seat of the Hall Master was likely to drag on for a long time.

"I apologize for failing to welcome the envoy upon arrival!"

A green-robed middle-aged man stepped forward.

With a single glance, Zhang Xuan immediately knew that he was the first Vice Hall Master, Liao Xun!

While the Great Herb King didn't know much about envoys from the headquarter, he was well aware of the three Vice Hall Masters of the Poison Hall. On the road here, he had already described the unique characteristics of each of the three to Zhang Xuan in detail.

Liao Xun was a 2-star pinnacle poison master, and it was probable that he would become a 3-star poison master in the near future. Even though he put on a gentle front, he was the kind to have a blade hidden beneath his smile.

It was completely possible for him to be smiling at you at one moment, only to stab you in the back once you turn around.

The typical wolf cloaked in a sheep's skin.

The other two middle-aged men beside Liao Xun also stepped forward and bowed, "Red Lotus Range Poison Hall branch Vice Hall Master Yao Qing (Ge Xiao) pays respect to the envoy!"

Zhang Xuan lightly nodded in response to their greetings.

"How should I address you? If it's convenient, can you show me your [Golden Poison

Heart Token]? It's not that I am doubting your identity, but it's a rule from the headquarter. The envoy has to flash the token representing his identity before we can welcome you in!"

The three Vice Hall Masters and the several elders walked toward Zhang Xuan. The first Vice Hall Master Liao Xun smiled politely as he asked.

"You wish to see my Golden Poison Heart Token? I don't mind showing you!"

Zhang Xuan looked at him impassively. With a perfectly calm and cold voice, he uttered, "But...."

"Are you qualified?"

Sword of state: In China, it is known as Shangfang Baojian. In ancient times, the bearer of the sword was able to represent the emperor himself.

Chapter 277

Another One Appears

Just as the Great Herb King was wondering how Physician Bai would deal with the three Vice Hall Masters and the numerous elders, he heard the other party's reply. At this moment, he could almost see the grim future which awaited him.

The Golden Poison Heart Token bore testimony to the identity of the envoy, and it was natural that the other party would request to see it. There was no problem with their words at all.

Yet, to ask if they were qualified....

The old Hall Master had died, and the three Vice Hall Masters and the numerous elders were already the top leaders of the Poison Hall. If even they weren't qualified, who could be?

No matter how noble the position of an envoy is, there should be a limit to your arrogance. To act so haughtily.... You will surely be beaten to death!

"Envoy must be pulling our legs!"

As the Great Herb King expected, Vice Hall Master's smiling face crumbled upon hearing Zhang Xuan's words. "I am the first Vice Hall Master of the Red Lotus Branch. Now that the Hall Master isn't around anymore, I have become the highest ranking person here, so naturally, I am qualified!"

"I already know that your Hall Master is dead, and the reason why I am here is to decide on the next Hall Master. Otherwise, why would I come to such a rundown place?"

"Before deciding on a new Hall Master, all of you have the same standing. If you think that you're qualified, don't tell just tell me with your mouths.... prove it to me through your mastery and understanding of poison."

Zhang Xuan flung his sleeves, and he stared at the group authoritatively. "What our

Poison Hall needs are capable poison masters, not a bunch of useless fools!"

"Mastery of poison?" Liao Xun was taken aback. "Envoy wishes to test us?"

"That's right. I have no time to squander on you, and I don't want to waste my breath. The value of a poison master should be determined by the poison they can create. You will all concoct a poison while I observe by the side, and whoever is able to concoct a poison that I've never seen before or speak of a theory I've never heard before, will be qualified to see the Golden Poison Heart Token and become the next Hall Master!"

Zhang Xuan glanced at the crowd with an indifferent gaze. "Otherwise, rather than handing over this branch to any useless fool, I might as well destroy it myself!"

"Yes...."

Upon hearing the straightforward words of the envoy, the group looked at each other with grim expressions.

In the past, as long as they served the envoys well, the envoys would satisfy their demands.

But from the looks of it, this method would not work on this envoy.

As soon as he reached, this envoy established his dominance, and declared that the top seat would be granted based on nothing else but capability!

And those who didn't possess the capability should stop spouting nonsense.

....

"As expected of the man who managed to remove the Contract Gu from me, incredible!"

Seeing how 'Physician Bai' resolved the crisis with a few words, the Great Herb King heaved a sigh of relief. At the same time, he felt completely impressed with the other party's ability.

This Physician Bai wasn't just capable in the Way of Medicine, he also possessed a precise understanding of the human heart.

Aware that the three Vice Hall Masters were vying for the seat of the Hall Master, he used it as a bait very conveniently.

They had already been fighting for the seat for a long time now, and none of them was willing to submit to anyone else. Now that there was a charter to resolve the conflict, they were determined to make use of this opportunity to surpass the other candidates.

Even if they doubted his identity, they weren't in any position to make the verification. If any of them insisted, it would mean that.... he was incapable, and wasn't able to establish dominance!

With a single word, he turned the arrows back at the three Vice Hall Masters and forced them to fight it out.

He is indeed incredible!

However....

In order to test the three of them, you yourself must be adept in poison as well. Given how you don't even know what a poison master is just half a month ago, how do you intend to test them?

If you aren't able to recognize any of the poison the three Vice Hall Masters concoct, it would be clear that you are a fake without even having to check on your Golden Poison Heart Token!

Upon thinking of this, the Great Herb King's face turned bitter.

He felt that his life was truly hanging by a thread, and a single mistake would send him crashing straight down.

....

After settling this matter, the three Vice Hall Masters led the duo to the grandest building in the city.

"Envoy, please enlighten us on how you intend to conduct the examination!"

As soon as everybody was seated, Vice Hall Master Liao asked.

"Simple, my test will consist of two stage. In the first test, each of you will display your capability and concoct a poison you are adept at. In this stage, whoever who concocts the highest grade poison wins! As for the second stage, each of you will concoct a poison that you have created through your own research. Whoever can create a poison that is the most lethal and complex, such that even I am unable to discern it, will be declared the winner!"

Zhang Xuan said calmly.

Hearing the contents, the three Vice Hall Masters nodded their heads simultaneously.

Just like the apothecaries, the grade of the poison a poison master could concoct was directly proportionate to his tier. At the same time, the more incredible the poison one could create, the more likely one could reach greater heights as a poison master.

Thus, the first test assessed their abilities while the second one assessed their talents. If any one of them could stand out in both tests, no one would be able to object to him becoming the new Hall Master.

"Alright, I'll give you four hours to prepare!"

Casually waving them away, Zhang Xuan stood up. "Right, where's your book collection vault? I've received orders from the headquarter to look for a certain book."

"Look for a certain book?"

Everyone was perplexed, but upon hearing that it was an order from the headquarter, they hesitated for a moment and decided against asking.

"Envoy, the book collection vault is over there. I'll send my man to lead you there right now!" Liao Xun hurriedly said.

"There's no need, I can walk over myself. You all should start preparing for the examination. The position of the Hall Master is at stake, and I hope that you can give me a satisfactory performance so that I can account to the headquarter!"

Placing his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan said.

"Yes!"

Liao Xun and the others nodded.

Ignoring the others, Zhang Xuan started walking toward the book collection vault.

The Red Lotus Range Poison Hall had been established for several millennia, and they had a vast collection of books. The number of books here was nowhere inferior to that of the Beast Hall.

Upon entering the vault, a huge array of books placed neatly on bookshelves appeared before Zhang Xuan. The other end of the room could not be seen with just a single glance.

There were bamboo scrolls, papers tied together with strings, and even engravings on porcelain and animal bones.

Due to the secure location of the Poison Hall, it had not been through any war and the books were able to be maintained in good condition.

"To think that I would be able to enter so easily..."

After checking that there was no one behind him, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

His purpose at the Poison Hall was to browse through these books, and he thought that he would encounter a lot of trouble along the way. He didn't expect to succeed so easily.

But thinking about the matter, it wasn't that surprising either. While the others doubted his identity as the envoy, they didn't dare to challenge him openly.

After all, if Zhang Xuan turned out to be the real envoy, it meant that he represented the headquarter himself. It was completely possible for the entire branch to be destroyed if they were to get on his bad side.

On the other hand, if he were a fake, giving himself away was a matter of time and they would be able to get even with him then.

"I shouldn't care that much for now, reading the books and resolving the poison aura in my body is the priority at the moment!"

Even though the poison aura in his body had been suppressed by Heaven's Path

zhenqi, Zhang Xuan knew that it was a matter of time before it rebounded. Once that happens, his life would be in grave danger. If not for this tangible threat he felt, he wouldn't have risked his life to barge into the Poison Hall.

Since he has managed to enter the Poison Hall's book collection vault, it was imperative that he made good of his time.

The few Vice Hall Masters might have been daunted by him at the moment, but nobody could ensure that they wouldn't notice his disguise and turn on him at the next moment.

There was a huge collection of books here, but with Zhang Xuan's new 'Sprinting Book Browsing Technique', he should be able to finish duplicating them in the Library of Heaven's Path within two hours.

"Time to start working!"

Exhaling deeply, Zhang Xuan focused his attention. Placing his hands on the first row of the first bookshelf, he started to run.

....

"Vice Hall Master, do you think that the envoy.... is authentic?"

At the back of the room, Liao Xun was seated on an extravagant throne, and standing before him was the worried Elder Blackeye.

Everyone knew that Elder Blackeye was an impartial person, but they weren't aware that he was actually a subordinate of Vice Hall Master Liao Xun.

"Without seeing the Golden Poison Heart Token, even I am unable to confirm it!" Liao Xun hesitated for a moment before speaking. "However, even though the Poison Hall has kept a low profile for innumerable years, its name still strikes fear in hearts. I doubt that there's anyone who would be so daring as to come and court death!"

"That's true...." Elder Blackeye nodded.

While the Poison Hall had been living in seclusion, it didn't mean that anyone could climb over their heads. Impersonating an envoy.... is no different from courting death!

"Besides, there should be a motive behind for every action anyone does. If he is a fake, there has to be something here that is worth him risking his life for...." Liao Xun continued. "Other than poisons, our Poison Hall does not have anything valuable. I doubt that there'll be anyone who would risk his life to sneak in here!"

No matter what one does, there has to be a purpose behind it.

All the Poison Hall had was poison, and the most valuable commodity they possessed was medicinal herbs. Once the other party was exposed as a fake, he would definitely be killed within the blink of an eye. It was unthinkable for the other party to take such a huge risk for just that!

He didn't think that anyone would do this for any medicinal herb, which could be bought using money.

Of course, if he were to know that the other party was here for merely the books.... He would probably puke blood and go insane.

At least their poisons had a market value.... What's the use reading those books?

More importantly, he was running about instead of flipping through them....

"Vice Hall Master, have you forgotten.... about that?" Elder Blackeye hesitated for a moment before speaking.

"You mean that object below the volcano?"

Liao Xun's complexion turned grim.

"Indeed!" Elder Blackeye nodded. "The main reason why our Red Lotus branch is located in this remote and barren area is that object's existence. Could it be that news of that object's maturity had leaked and that the old Hall Master died because of this?"

"It's not impossible!"

Upon hearing those words, Liao Xun could no longer remain calm. "Call the Great Herb King in, I want to interrogate him!"

"Yes!" Elder Blackeye stood out, and in a moment, the Great Herb King was brought into the hall.

"The Great Herb King pays respect to Vice Hall Master Liao Xun and Elder Blackeye!"
The Great Herb King clasped his fist.

"Speak, how did you meet the envoy? Also, if I'm not wrong, you should be dead by now. Why are you still alive and kicking?"

Liao Xun's eyes narrowed.

"Under the effects of the Contract Gu, I was indeed on the verge of death. It was the envoy who saved me, and after which, he told me to bring him to the Poison Hall. Other than that.... I don't know anything else!"

The Great Herb King poured out the words, which had he agreed on with Physician Bai previously, hastily.

"Do you really not know anything else?" Vice Hall Master Liao Xun harrumphed. "You do know the consequences of lying to me, right?"

"I know!"

Fearful, the Great Herb King knelt to the floor.

"There's no a single falsehood in my words. Vice Hall Master is also aware that I am only a puppet and spokesperson of the Poison Hall. Because the elder said that he is the envoy, I didn't dare to stop him. Thus, I could only bring him here. I am truly unsure about anything else!"

"Un, you can leave now!"

After asking a few more questions, Liao Xun realized that he couldn't get any more information out of the Great Herb King's mouth.

"Yes!"

As if he were pardoned by the emperor, the Great Herb King rushed out of the hall without a second thought.

"Even my teacher is unable to remove the Contract Gu once it has melded into one's bloodstream. To be able to cure him without leaving any traumas, that person must be at least a 4-star poison master!"

After the Great Herb King left the room, Liao Xun tapped a finger on the table as he analyzed the matter. "Only the headquarter has 4-star poison masters!"

Even the greatest poison master in Red Lotus Range Poison Hall was only a 3-star.

Only the headquarter was capable of dispatching 4-star poison masters.

With that being established, the envoy was likely to be authentic.

"However, it's best to be careful. Elder Blackeye, I'll have to trouble you to head to the book collection vault to see what kind of book the envoy is looking for and see what he's up to!"

After hesitating for a moment, Liao Xun instructed.

"Yes!"

Elder Blackeye replied and stepped out of the room.

About two hours later, he returned back to the same room. He had an expression on his face that spoke of puzzlement and bewilderment.

"What's wrong? Is there anything amiss? Did he find the book he was looking for?"

Seeing his expression, Liao Xun couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked.

"There's nothing wrong.... and he didn't seem to be looking for a specific book either!"

Recalling the sight back then, Blackeye shook his head fervently.

He saw the incredibly callous envoy run around the book collection vault as though a lunatic. Even though the other party claimed that he was looking for a book, he didn't pull out a single book at all.

He had experienced and witnessed many different things in his life, but even so, he was unable to comprehend what he just saw.

If he wasn't certain that the other party was the envoy, he would have thought that the other party was a lunatic.

"It's good that there's nothing wrong!"

Liao Xun heaved a sigh of relief. "Seems like the envoy should be authentic, there's no need to doubt his identity anymore! We should spend more effort thinking of what poison to concoct later to win his admiration!"

Elder Blackeye nodded. Just as he was about to speak, the flustered Poison Master Liu from before barged into the room all of a sudden.

"Vice Hall Master...."

"What's wrong?" Liao Xun frowned.

"There's someone outside. He demands you and the other two Vice Hall Masters meet him.... he claimed that he is the.... envoy!"

Anxious, Poison Master Liu stuttered.

"Envoy?"

Liao Xun and Elder Blackeye glanced at each other and their eyes widened in doubt.

Isn't the envoy already here?

Why would... another one appear?

Chapter 278

This Time, We're Really Doomed

Seated on a stool in the hall, the Great Herb King wiped the cold sweat off his face.

Liao Xun wasn't the only one who had questioned him. The second and third Vice Hall Masters had sent men to interrogate him as well. If not for the words he had prepared beforehand, he would probably have been overwhelmed by the situation.

The pressure was just too great!

He was just a spokesperson. It was one thing for him to put on a mighty act outside, but to lie to the poison masters here.... It was something which he had never dared to think of.

If not for the other party having saved his life and the Poison Hall being so ungrateful, he would have refused to get involved....

But now, there is no path of retreat.

The moment Physician Bai is exposed, it is highly likely that he would die along with him.

The three Vice Hall Masters would poison to death everyone who knew that they were duped by a physician and failed to recognize the real envoy.

If such a humiliating matter were to spread out, they would find themselves too ashamed to command their subordinates and vie for the Hall Master position.

They would definitely slaughter a few people here and there to quell their anger.

Thus, if the Great Herb King wanted to live, he had to convince everyone that Physician Bai was the true envoy. This way, they wouldn't dare to lay their hands on him.

And from the looks of it, it seemed to be quite effective.

At the very least, even though the three Vice Hall Masters had their own doubts, they didn't dare to act recklessly.

"I wonder what Physician Bai wants from the Poison Hall. He should hurry up and get on with it so that we can leave quickly...."

Upon recalling Physician Bai, the Great Herb King shook his head.

The other party hadn't told him the reason why he had to come to the Poison Hall at all cost, but he had his own guesses; it was probably a treasure or something he needed. If that's the case, he should quickly look for it.... What was he up to running over to the book collection vault?

The book collection vault contained only books of relation to poison masters. Since any poison master in the Poison Hall could enter freely, it was impossible for any treasures to be hidden within.

Or did he really risk his life to come here.... to look for a certain book?

If that was the case, then the situation was too darned!

"Forget it. He should be well aware of the danger too, so he wouldn't stay here for too long...."

Just as the thought flashed through the Great Herb King's mind, a commotion could be heard outside. Countless poison masters headed straight for the entrance of the city.

The Poison Hall has been closed to outsiders for countless years, and poison masters usually remain in their stations and mind their own businesses. It is rare to see such huge movement within the city. What is going on?

"Poison Master Han, what's going on?"

Standing up, the Great Herb King pulled a poison master aside and asked.

"You don't know? They're saying that another person claiming to be the envoy has arrived, and everyone in the Poison Hall is expected to welcome him!" Poison Master Han said.

Since Physician Bai is an imposter, can it be that.... this is the real deal?

If he is indeed the real one, then we are in deep trouble!

To think that they would possess such incredible luck as to meet the real one under such circumstances. To make things worse, they were trapped in the Poison Hall....

The Great Herb King saw everything before him turn dark and grim.

"That's right. Let's go and take a look. It's rare that the headquarter send anyone down, why would it send two envoys at the same time?" Poison Master Han was perplexed. As he said so, he pulled the Great Herb King toward the entrance.

"I...."

The Great Herb King felt his both legs convulsing. Shaking his head profusely, he panicked, "I.... I think I'll pass!"

They had just barely managed to scrape by, and the true envoy had to appear now. Heavens, you must be playing with me!

"Let's go!"

Not allowing the other party to reject him, Poison Master Han pulled him, and it didn't take long for the duo to reach the entrance of the city.

By the time they arrived, the entrance was already filled with countless poison masters. The three Vice Hall Masters and all of the elders stood in front of the crowd.

Two figures stood before them.

"Butler Lu?"

With a single glance, the Great Herb King recognized one of the two figures.

It was Butler Lu from his residence.

He once brought Butler Lu here, but the other party merely waited for him at the entrance to the Poison Hall then. To think that he would still remember the directions.

He must be the one who led the way here. Otherwise, it would be difficult for even the envoy to find the Poison Hall which was hidden amidst the mountains.

Understanding this, he turned to look at the person standing next to him.

He was a middle-aged man dressed in a dark-red cloak. His hands were behind his back, and his chin was tilted upward. His face had a bizarre expression which made it impossible to discern whether it was a smile or a furious one.

"That is.... poison master emblem.... 3-star poison master?"

The Great Herb King's eyes fell upon the other party's robe, and his mouth twitched.

There was a poison master emblem hanging on the other party's chest, and the three stars on it shone brightly.

Even the old Hall Master, the greatest expert of the Poison Hall when he was still alive, was merely a 3-star primary poison master. After his death, the position as the strongest was taken over by Vice Hall Master Liao Xun, a 2-star pinnacle poison master. The fact that the other party was a 3-star poison master....

Initially, the Great Herb King had suspected whether the other party could be fake. However, upon seeing his emblem, that sliver of hope he held was crushed.

Even if he weren't the envoy, as a 3-star poison master, no one in the Poison Hall would dare to offend him. Otherwise, it was likely that the hall could be reduced to a hornet's nest through his poison in an instant, and they probably wouldn't even realize how they died.

Those who are able to reach 3-star possess a cultivation of at minimum Zhizun realm. Even if he didn't resort to poison, he was able to easily destroy the entire Poison Hall with a flip of his palm.

"This...."

Liao Xun didn't expect another envoy to appear, and a 3-star poison master at that. His attitude turned polite immediately, and clasping his fist, he greeted, "May I know how I should address you? If it's convenient, can you show me your [Golden Poison Heart Token]? It's not that I am doubting your identity, but it's a rule from the headquarter. An envoy has to flash the token representing his identity before we can welcome him in!"

He spoke the same words that he said to Zhang Xuan when he first arrived.

The envoy didn't reply. Instead, he flicked his wrist, and a golden heart-shaped token appeared in his palm. He threw it over casually.

Catching it hastily, Liao Xun and the others examined it quickly. With a single glance, their eyes narrowed, and they came to a conclusion.

"It's real!"

The Golden Poison Heart Token was something that only an envoy could possess and it represented the Poison Hall headquarter. There was a unique distant aura infused within it, allowing people who look at it to immediately discern its genuity, even if they hadn't seen it before.

"He is a 3-star poison master and possesses the Golden Poison Heart Token.... If that's the case, it's impossible for him to be a fake. Then, the one before...."

Gedeng! Upon seeing the token of identification, Liao Xun and the others' hearts skipped a beat simultaneously.

If this one is real, the one before is likely to be a fake.

Otherwise, why would he refuse to show the Golden Poison Heart Token?

"Why, is there a problem?"

Seeing the rapidly changing expressions in the crowd, the envoy's own expression darkened. Even though there wasn't a hint of anger in his tone, his words seemed to possess an authoritative quality.

"That's not it...."

Liao Xun hesitated for a moment before explaining, "Another envoy arrived right before you. That's why, when we heard of your presence, we were astonished!"

"Hm?"

The envoy frowned. "The headquarter has only sent me over to determine the new Hall Master, as well as to retrieve that object, which should have matured by now. It didn't send anyone else. An envoy who came before me? What do you mean?"

"It's like this. Two hours ago, a man came claiming that he's the envoy. He is currently browsing through books in the book collection vault!"

Liao Xun explained.

"He claimed that he's the envoy? Then, does he have the Golden Poison Heart Token?"

The envoy's eyebrows shot up.

"That...." Liao Xun hesitated for a moment. "He didn't show us the golden token!"

"Preposterous!" The envoy flung his sleeves, and an overwhelming aura gushed into the heavens. "How can he be the envoy without the Golden Poison Heart Token? Bring me to him! I would like to see the one who is so brazen as to impersonate an envoy of the headquarter!"

"Yes! Envoy, this way please!"

Liao Xun and the others ushered him in toward the center hall of the Poison Hall hastily.

Watching as the group left, the Great Herb King's body swayed, as though the energy in his body had been sapped dry.

"Old master...."

Upon seeing the old master's state, Butler Lu hurried forward to support him.

"What's going on...."

The Great Herb King sent a telepathic message to Butler Lu.

"A day after you and Physician Bai left, that man appeared and demanded for you to lead him to the Poison Hall. Without a choice, I could only bring him up the mountains. I rushed all the way up so as to catch up with you, but.... it turns out that I am too late!"

Butler Lu was also on the verge of tears.

A total of four people knew that Physician Bai was going to impersonate the envoy, and they were the Great Herb King, Butler Lu, Physician Bai, and Mo Yu.

Mo Yu had already left for Tianwu Royal City, so only the three of them were left.

That person has already verified his identity, so Butler Lu wasn't in the position to turn him down. As the Great Herb King was absent, he could only lead him up the mountains himself. Initially, he planned to catch up with the Great Herb King and Physician Bai so as to inform them that there was no need for the latter to pass off as the envoy anymore. But.... despite rushing the entire road, he wasn't able to catch up with them.

"This time.... we're really doomed!"

After hearing Butler Lu's explanation, the Great Herb King's mouth twitched. Blood welled up in his chest, and it felt as though it would spurt out at any moment.

If Butler Lu and the envoy had come a little later, Physician Bai could have got what he wanted and left the Poison Hall. Even if he was discovered to be a fake later on, there was nothing the others could do about him once he took off his disguise.

If Butler Lu and the envoy was a little earlier, they would be able to catch up with them. If they knew that the envoy was already on his way to the Poison Hall, there would be no need for them to impersonate as him. They could simply follow behind the envoy and enter the Poison Hall just the same.

But.... Physician Bai had just claimed that he was the envoy, and the other side had already believed his words. Yet.... the true envoy had to arrive at this moment....

It was like having a naked beautiful lady beside you. Even if you said that you didn't do anything to her, no one in the world would believe it!

Being caught in the act, no explanation would work!

He knew that it was a bad idea to pass off as the envoy....

But to think that it would be that bad of an idea!

It looked like the life which he had just retrieved with insurmountable difficulty would have to be forfeited....

"Old master, what do we do now?" Butler Lu had also arrived at the same conclusion and his face warped with worry.

"I don't know...."

The Great Herb King shook his head, "Looks like we can only wait for our deaths...."

Tearful, he scanned the surroundings. Numerous poison masters had their eyes set on him, so it was impossible for him to escape. Thus, he could only follow behind the crowd toward the hall.

"Right.... It seems that Physician Bai is still unaware of the arrival of the real envoy!"

After taking a few steps forward, the Great Herb King suddenly thought of something and his expression changed.

If the other party knew of the matter beforehand, he could at least start thinking of a solution. Given that he was in the dark, he would definitely be caught off guard when the others challenged him all of a sudden....

However, the Vice Hall Masters and elders were walking in front of him and the envoy was present as well. It was already too late to inform Physician Bai.

His thoughts were still running wild when the group arrived at the main hall.

"Elder Blackeye, I trouble you to invite that envoy out!"

After taking a seat, Liao Xun waved his hands and instructed.

"Yes!"

Elder Blackeye walked in a hurry toward the book collection vault.

It has already been more than two hours since Zhang Xuan's arrival, and he had finished reading through all of the books in the book collection vault. Seeing that the other party was here inviting him over, he tagged behind him toward the main hall without questions.

"Why? Are you done preparing already? If you're done with your preparations, we can start now!"

Upon reaching the hall, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and glanced impassively at Liao Xun and the others.

"Are you the one who claimed that you're the envoy?"

Before Liao Xun and the others could speak, the envoy stood up and stared at Zhang Xuan with narrowed eyes.

"Who do you think you are?"

Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up. Carrying the same unopposable authority in his voice, he spoke sharply, "Did I allow you to speak?"

"The heck!"

Blood spurted from the mouth of the Great Herb King, "We're really doomed...."

Chapter 279

Senior Uncle

When Butler Lu realized that the middle-aged man was Physician Bai in disguise, his face contorted, and he nearly ripped off his own shirt out of frustration....

Even if you don't recognize the envoy, you should at least recognize the poison master emblem pinned on his chest!

There are no 3-star poison masters in this Poison Hall. Where else can he come from other than the headquarter?

If you pay a little more attention, you'll notice all of these details....

To say 'Who do you think you are, did I allow you to speak' straight in his face'

The heck heck heck heck heck!

Before you said those words, you could have at least come up with some excuse to explain yourself. Now that you've insulted him in public, there's no room for reconciliation!

Even though he has only known the other party for a few days, the Physician Bai he knew was an impressive and rational figure. Why did he suddenly become such a reckless person?

Your actions aren't just bringing harm to yourself, the old master and I will also be dragged into this disaster!

The master and servant duo felt as if they were going insane. At the same moment, the mouths of Liao Xun and the others twitched.

They have seen arrogant people, but it was their first time meeting SUCH an arrogant person!

For a mere impersonator to speak to the real envoy in such a manner, the word

"courageous" is no longer sufficient to describe him!

This is simply.... courting death!

Not just courting death, but courting the worst possible way to die.

"You reap what you sow!"

"This time, we don't even have to do anything. The envoy will help us settle it all!"

A gloating expression appeared on the faces of the other two Vice Hall Masters.

To think that a mere impersonator had managed to scare them, they felt ashamed just by the thought of it. If they could, they would rip apart the other party's tendons and pluck out his bones, so as to pay him back for the humiliation.

But from the looks of it now, they wouldn't get a turn.

"What did you say?"

As everyone expected, the envoy flew into a rage immediately. A powerful aura burst forth from him, reaching to the skies. It exerted so much pressure on the crowd that they found it difficult to even breathe.

Zhizun realm!

Just as they had guessed, the envoy was indeed a Zhizun realm expert!

Fighter 9-dan Zhizun realm. In this vast world, they were the ones who reigned supreme. With strength exceeding ten thousand ding, they possessed the might to destroy castles, eradicate oceans, and obliterate mountains.

The moment his rage flurried, the heaven and earth wailed in agony beneath his might. The pure energy he emanated gushed over the crowd, and as though a massive torrent, they were helpless before it.

Liao Xun and the others retreated uncontrollably before the overwhelming might that was displayed.

The Great Herb King's face scrunched up in fear.

It was too frightening.

Even if a Zongshi pinnacle were to face him, he would be rendered completely helpless.

They were thinking that the impersonator would be forced to give himself away under the intimidating aura when, instead, Zhang Xuan frowned in displeasure.

"Atrocious!"

Bellowing angrily, Zhang Xuan flung his hands, "How dare you darned rascal lay your hands on me! Who gave you the guts to do so?"

"Ah...."

The Great Herb King convulsed.

Displeased, the heck you are displeased about!

Furthermore, calling him a darned rascal....

Brother, where does your confidence come from?

Your identity has been exposed. If you carry on with the act, the other party will really beat you to death....

Even though the Great Herb King couldn't tell the exact strength of Physician Bai, after days of interacting with him, he had gauged it to be around Zongshi realm. In any case, he thought that it was impossible for the other party's cultivation to be above Zongshi realm pinnacle.

Even I myself will be rendered helpless before the envoy, why the heck are you acting so arrogantly?

....

"Fine! To think that an impersonator would dare talk to me like that, I'm truly impressed. Since you are that tired of living, allow me to grant your wish!"

He thought that the impersonator would be intimidated by his aura, but contrary to

his expectations, the other party criticized him for being brazen. The envoy felt so infuriated that he could feel himself losing his rationality, and killing intent gleamed in his eyes.

The headquarter had sent only him here, so the man before him had to be a fake!

For a mere impersonator to yell at him, there must be something wrong with his head, or he must have extremely large guts!

With a slight step, the envoy charged forward as though a bolt of lightning. Opening his fingers, an immense force burst forth from his palm and flew straight at Zhang Xuan!

Zhizun realm is also known a Ten Thousand Ding realm, and the strength of a Zhizun realm expert isn't something that any Zongshi realm cultivator can withstand. The envoy's might crushed down on Zhang Xuan as though a gigantic wave, leaving him with no place to hide. Even a small hill would be reduced to powder under that might!

Due to his insufficient cultivation, Zhang Xuan's body stiffened before that overwhelming strength. Under this condition, it would be difficult for him to even execute a battle technique.

With his pure Heaven's Path zhenqi, it was rare for Zhang Xuan's to suffer from such suppression. However, he was only a Half-Zongshi, and the gap between him and a Zhizun realm expert was simply too huge.

Even though Zhang Xuan was capable of defeating opponents beyond that of his cultivation realm, that was only limited to Zongshi realm primary stage cultivators. Before a Zhizun expert, he wasn't capable of any retaliation. The most he could do was to escape his attacks using the Heaven's Path Movement Art.

Feeling the intense pressure on his body, Zhang Xuan's mind moved swiftly. He maintained the impassive look on his face, but inside, Zhang Xuan was panicking.

He had guessed that the other party was the true envoy, but if he were to back out at this point, death would become inevitable.

Aren't you arrogant?

I'll be more arrogant than you.

And this was the only way Zhang Xuan would be able to scare the other party, making him fearful of laying his hands on him.

Yet, that fellow didn't fall for his tricks and, instead, attacked him directly. This placed Zhang Xuan in a terrible position.

"Flaws!"

Even if he were to dodge using the Heaven's Path Movement Art, he could only do so for a blow or two before his stamina ran out. By then, he would be dead meat as well. Thus, he hurriedly turned his attention to the Library of Heaven's Path.

A book appeared before him.

Looking at the contents, Zhang Xuan calmed his nerves. He revised his original intention of escaping using the Heaven's Path Movement Art, and with an absurdly calm expression, spouted coldly.

"Gu Mu, to dare to lay your hands on me, do you crave for your entire line to die?"

Hu!

"You...."

Upon hearing those words, the calm envoy was taken aback. He pulled back his palms forcefully and questioned in astonishment, "Who are you? Why do you know my name?"

Upon receiving the orders from the headquarter, he rushed here from afar, and on the journey, he had never mentioned his name to anyone.

Before receiving the orders, he had been secluding himself to focus on his cultivation. Other than his examiners and friends, almost no one knew his name. Logically speaking, it would be impossible for anyone in this backward location to know of his identity. Thus, upon hearing his name from the mouth of that fellow before him, he could not help but feel bewildered.

Of course, even though he withdrew his palms, he didn't disperse his might. The moment the other party spouted nonsense, that force would burst through his body immediately.

Seeing the other party stop, Zhang Xuan knew that he had taken a successful gamble and heaved a sigh of relief.

Humans were curious creatures, and regardless of how furious a man could be, hearing a stranger call his name would cause him to be puzzled. Using the information from the book on the other party in the library, Zhang Xuan was confident of convincing him to not dare raise his fists again.

Placing his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan stood upright as though an erect spear before the other party. It seemed as though he was impervious to the rage and intimidation of the party.

"In the Xuanyuan Conferred Kingdom branch, you are the fourteenth person to pass the 3-star poison master examination, and you took only five years to reach 3-star pinnacle from then. As such, you are reputed to be a genius who appears only once every century!"

"Born with an innate passion toward poison, you passed the apprentice poison master examination at fourteen years of age. The [Fiery Heat Powder] which you concocted then killed the 314 people in your mortal enemy's household. At seventeen years of age, you created the [Soul Shattering Dust], and you managed to kill a Zongshi realm primary stage expert with it. At twenty-six years of age, you passed the 2-star poison master examination, and the [Frangible Bone Fragrance] which you concocted allowed you to successfully poison a Zongshi realm pinnacle savage beast to death...."

"At thirty-five years of age, you came under the tutelage of the Hundred Variations Poison Master Jin Conghai. This year, you're forty-four, and your prowess in poison is unmatched in the Xuanyuan branch.... This time, the headquarter sent you here as the envoy to train you so that you can take over as the next Hall Master of the branch!"

"I wonder...." Zhang Xuan paused for a moment. Chuckling, he glanced at the envoy. "....if what I've said is true?"

"Who in the world.... are you?"

Envoy Gu Mu's eyes narrowed.

Other than his closest kin, no one knew about these facts, especially the orders from the headquarters. Yet, the other party knew of them as though it was in the grasp of his palm....

Who in the world is he?

He didn't recall any acquaintance having such an appearance.

That's to say, he didn't know the person before him at all. But how could the other party know of the affairs surrounding him in such great detail?

Disregarding the Envoy Gu Mu's question, Zhang Xuan chuckled, "In order to become a 4-star poison master, you went to the extent of even testing out poisons on your own body. Others are impressed by your feat of giving up your life for your passion for poisons, but the truth is that you wish to exact vengeance for your dead wife!"

"Your enemy.... is a 4-star poison master! His abilities at using poison are above yours, and if you don't reach his level, you'll be unable to kill him!"

"You, you...."

Gu Mu's face paled, and his eyes narrowed. His face seemed as though he has seen a ghost.

The other party was completely right.

All along, he had been cultivating and researching new poison with everything he had, and this all was for his vengeance!

Just that, it was a secret he had hidden in the depths of his heart. He had never told anyone about it, and he didn't dare to.

After all, every single poison master was an important asset of the Poison Hall. If they found out that he intended to kill a 4-star poison master, someone would definitely stop him.

Thus, this matter had always remained as his own personal secret. Yet, at this moment, it was coming out from the mouth of a stranger. How could he not be astonished and terrified?

"Your current cultivation realm is Zhizun realm pinnacle, and to become a 4-star poison master, you have to achieve a breakthrough in your cultivation. Thus, you've been feeding on [Green Snake Grass] and applying it on your shenmen acupoint so as to increase your potential. At the same time, you applied [Bone Corroding Powder] on

your shenhun acupoint to boost your Soul Depth. Even though your strength and Soul Depth has increased under the stimulation of the poison, it has worn your life thin. If I'm not wrong, you are already nearing your end, and you can possibly die at any moment now!"

Circling around the other party, Zhang Xuan sighed.

When the other party attacked him, he executed a battle technique. As such, a book was compiled, and the other party's flaws were revealed on it. Shockingly, there were more than hundred flaws on him!

To outsiders, he may seem like a person who has a bright future ahead of him, a 3-star pinnacle poison master who could become the new Hall Master of the Xuanyuan branch at any moment. However, his body had already reached his limits, and he could die at any moment.

Based on his current condition, it was unlikely for him to survive more than three years.

Deng deng deng deng!

Staggering backward a few steps, Gu Mu's face became ghastly white.

The other party's words were completely correct, he had been exchanging his own life for strength. If he didn't do so, he would never become a 4-star poison master in this life, and without reaching that level, how could he exact his vengeance?

If he didn't avenge his wife, he wouldn't be able to face her in the underworld.

"Who in the world are you?"

Clenching his fists tightly, Gu Mu stared grimly at Zhang Xuan.

To know his background so clearly and not fearing his attacks at all, could he possibly be an unknown senior of Xuanyuan branch?

"Who am I...."

Zhang Xuan lifted his gaze, and a faraway look appeared in his eyes. "Of course you don't know who I am. That's because.... even your teacher would have to call me...."

"Senior uncle!"

Those who come under your teacher earlier than you are normally known as your seniors.

(Unless you are a direct disciple. Direct disciples are given seniority over normal students, as in the case with Liu shi and the others)

Your teacher's senior is known as your senior uncle.

Chapter 280

Display of Strength

"Your teacher's senior uncle?"

"Senior granduncle of the envoy?"

Staring at each other, the Great Herb King and Butler Lu nearly pulled off all of their beards.

Aren't you Physician Bai?

Weren't you unaware of whether the envoy would come, and if he did, when he would come?

Aren't you an impersonator?

When did you.... become the envoy's senior granduncle?

The heck!

More importantly.... the envoy seems to be completely dazed at the situation. He doesn't seem to know that he has a senior granduncle!

You could have feigned as his senior, his junior, his acquaintance, or even his friends.... Yet, to take such a high position....

Brother, you sure know how to speak!

If they were in Zhang Xuan's position, they wouldn't have even dared to think about it.

The duo only felt a surge of blood rushing up their throat, threatening to burst out at any moment.

Liao Xun, the other two Hall Masters, and the numerous elders stared at one another blankly.

They thought that the impersonator would be killed with a single slap from the envoy, or at the very least, be crippled. Never in their dreams did they expect the both of them to be acquainted, and.... they seemed to share the same lineage at that.

It can't be such a coincidence, can it?

"My teacher calls you senior granduncle?" Gu Mu was stunned as well. His entire body stiffened in discomfort.

The person before knew everything about him, so he thought that perhaps he was a colleague in the same branch whom he had never noticed. Never in his dreams did he expect that.... they would be related in such a way!

He had followed his teacher for countless years but had never heard from him that he had a senior granduncle.

But if the other party was lying, how did he know everything about him? And on top of that, for everything he said to be correct?

Putting everything aside, just his ability to discern his current condition was something even his teacher was incapable of.

"That's just in terms of our seniority. I like to wander about, and I often dwell outside. Thus, your teacher might not even know of my existence!" Putting on the disposition of an expert, Zhang Xuan shook his hands casually.

If Zhang Xuan wanted to prevent the other party from laying hands on him, he had to possess an identity that was sufficiently convincing.

In any case, even those who attend the same lesson can be termed as 'senior' and 'junior'. Given that Zhang Xuan was impersonating as someone who was distantly related to him, it was impossible for him to gather sufficient evidence to overthrow his claim on the spot.

After all, he can't possibly run over to his teacher now and ask him if he has a senior uncle!

Besides, I've already said that even your teacher might not know of me, so even it would do nothing even if you try to verify with him.

However, just words were insufficient to establish Zhang Xuan's prestige. The best way to do so was to cure him of his problem, and only that way would the other party hold complete faith in him.

Thus, Zhang Xuan decided to get straight to the topic. He glanced at Gu Mu with a smile and said, "Let's not talk about this anymore. It's fate for us to meet here, so I would like to ask you. Do you want to solve your affliction?"

"Is there.... a solution.... for my affliction?"

Gu Mu initially held some doubts about the identity of the person before him. However, upon hearing the other party talk about solving his affliction, his face immediately flushed with agitation.

If given a chance to live, who would be willing to die?

Furthermore, he was shouldering a heavy grudge.

His wife was killed by a 4-star poison master, and all along, he had been suppressing the pain and anger within him. He had focused all of his energy on his cultivation in hopes that he could return justice to his wife.

He was just a thin line away from reaching a higher realm and a faint ray of hope had appeared for his vengeance. Yet, recently, he realized that the forceful method of raising his cultivation had already sapped his vitality dry. Just like what the other party said, he didn't have long to live.

He didn't mind dying!

But he had to tear that person to pieces before he dies.

"You used poison to raise your cultivation forcefully, resulting in the loss of your vitality. If it were anyone else, they would be helpless before your condition. However, your issue doesn't mean anything to me!" Zhang Xuan said with an indifferent expression.

The Heaven's Path zhenqi was capable of even mending a body which had been ravaged by the Contract Gu, not to mention, Gu Mu who was still full of strength.

"Senior uncle, I plead of you to save me!"

After hesitating for a moment, Gu Mu knelt onto the floor, and his eyes were filled with determination. "As long as you treat my affliction such that I am able to slaughter my enemy, I am willing to serve you for the rest of my life!"

After the death of his wife, he has been wanting to follow her footsteps. However, the reason why he had been struggling in life was that he wanted to avenge her.

He wasn't certain about the background of the person before him, but since he was able to discern the problems he was suffering from, something that even his teacher failed to notice, perhaps he could solve this problem of his!

As long as the problem disappeared, Gu Mu was confident that the foundation he built throughout the years would allow him to break through the final impasse, reaching the level he dreamed of.

This could be considered an opportunity. If it succeeded, there would be hope for his vengeance once more.

However, if the other party was fooling him, he would make sure to drag him down as well. In any case, he didn't have long to live, and there was nothing for him to fear.

"Ah...."

Upon seeing Gu Mu kneel to the floor, everyone's eyeballs fell to the ground.

The lofty envoy of the headquarter, a 3-star pinnacle poison master who possessed the strength of a Zhizun pinnacle, was kneeling to an impersonator....

Is this for real?

Everyone was shocked, especially the Great Herb King.

The Great Herb King knew the true identity of this 'impersonator'. He wasn't the senior granduncle of the envoy as he claimed and wasn't even close.

Yet, with just a few casual words, the other party knelt to him willingly....

Physician Bai, you have my utmost respect!

If it was him, he would definitely kneel down fearfully and plead for his life the

moment someone might expose his identity.

In the end, someone did indeed kneel, but the one who knelt was the real deal....

Even though he had witnessed the sight with his own eyes, he couldn't help but doubt if it was a dream.

The twist occurred too quickly, catching him off guard.

However, after recovering from his astonishment, he could understand the rationale behind the other party's actions.

Taking him from a few days ago, if someone had said that he was capable of curing him of the affliction caused by the Contract Gu, putting aside senior granduncle, he would even willingly call him grandfather.

It is only on the verge of death would one understand how valuable life is. In the face of death, dignity and pride mean nothing at all.

"I can help you, but I'll have to state my rules clearly beforehand!"

Turning around, Zhang Xuan beckoned with his hands, "Great Herb King, tell Gu Mu about my rules!"

He had achieved only Half-Zongshi, and if he were to treat the other party while he was awake, the other party would definitely notice a peculiarity and thus, destroy his image as an expert which he had painstakingly built up.

In the end, it was best for the other party to be unconscious during the treatment.

This way, he would be able to hide his true cultivation realm and conceal the uniqueness of the Heaven's Path zhenqi

However, if he were to say these words himself, many people would doubt his intentions. Thus, it was better for Great Herb King to do the talking instead.

The Great Herb King was also a smart person, and he understood Zhang Xuan's intentions immediately. Stepping forward, he explained, "When Senior Bai treats someone, he requires the patient to be completely unconscious!"

"Completely unconscious?"

Gu Mu frowned.

Being knocked unconscious meant that he was entrusting his life into the hands of the others, and he wouldn't have any say over what the other party did.

While the other party knew everything about his background, he still bore doubts toward the other party's identity, and he didn't yet trust him.

"Don't worry, this is just Senior Bai's rules. Back then, when he treated me from my Contract Gu affliction, he knocked me out as well!" Seeing the hesitation in the other party's eyes, the Great Herb King persuaded.

"Treated you from your Contract Gu affliction? You mean.... he settled the Contract Gu you were suffering from?"

Gu Mu was taken aback, and disbelief filled his face.

Liao Xun and the others may not understand fully the potency of the Contract Gu as 2-star poison masters, but as a 3-star pinnacle who had encountered innumerable formidable poison masters, Gu Mu knew just how fearsome the Contract Gu was.

Rumors had it that once one was afflicted with the Contract Gu, even a 5-star poison master would be unable to save him.

For this senior granduncle to be capable of solving an affliction which even a 5-star poison master is unable to, can it be that.... his tier has already surpassed that?

"That's right. A few days ago, I nearly died from the Contract Gu, and it is Senior Bai who helped me then!" The Great Herb King said.

"I can bear testimony to that. A Contract Gu was indeed implanted into him by the old Hall Master!" Liao Xun and the others affirmed the Great Herb King's words.

"Able to remove the Contract Gu?"

Clenching his fists tightly, Gu Mu turned to examine the Great Herb King, and he realized something amiss in him.

As a 3-star pinnacle poison master, he was able to see the telltale signs that a Contract Gu once inhabited his body and wrecked havoc within.

Upon confirming his judgment, his face flushed furiously. If this 'senior granduncle' was able to treat the Contract Gu, it was highly possible that he would be able to treat him as well!

However, he was still worried about being knocked unconscious.

"I know what you're worried about. Allowing yourself to be knocked unconscious means entrusting your life to another, and if the other party holds malicious intentions toward you, you won't even know how you died. No one would be able to make such a decision easily!"

Zhang Xuan could sense his hesitation. "I would have left immediately if it were anyone else who doubted me, but since you're my junior, I can tell you this right away.... If I want to kill you, I need not go through so much trouble!"

At this point, Zhang Xuan's foot pushed against the ground.

Sou!

Before anyone could react, he was already sixty meters away. Then, in the next instant, the figure in the distance blurred, and Zhang Xuan had returned to where he was before, as though he had never moved at all.

"What incredible speed!"

"Even Zhizun pinnacle experts aren't capable of such a feat!"

"Can it be that.... he has already surpassed Zhizun realm?"

....

Everyone present was astonished by the display, and their eyes narrowed in fear.

They were all cultivators of Zongshi realm and below, and they had never witnessed such speed.

How can one who is capable of traveling at such incredible speed possess a weak

cultivation? It was fortunate that they didn't make a move on him. Otherwise, if they were to have angered him, he could have really destroyed this entire Poison Hall branch.

The Great Herb King's face turned pale too.

All along, he thought that he was evenly matched with this Physician Bai. Never in his dreams did he expect such a huge gap between the two of them.

With such speed, before he could even react, his head would have been lopped off his neck.

Gu Mu tightened his clenched fists too.

His maximum speed wasn't even close to that that the other party just displayed.

And judging from the party's expression, he had exerted nowhere near his full strength.

That was to say....

The cultivation of this 'senior granduncle' of his had definitely surpassed Zhizun, reaching a whole new level.

"The effect seems to be good!"

Seeing the astonishment on everyone's faces, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Having reached Half-Zongshi, the speed and distance he could cover with a single usage of Heaven's Path Movement Art had increased.

This move might have appeared formidable with its outstanding speed, but given Zhang Xuan's current physical resilience, executing it twice was already his limit. Furthermore, Zhang Xuan himself was unable to react to that overwhelming speed, making it impossible for him to use it to hurt or kill another.

In fact, while this move was an ideal escape technique, it was utterly useless for offense.

Of course, Zhang Xuan had just found another use for it.... showing off.

Suppressing the tremendous ache across his entire body, he drove his zhenqi to heal those muscle tears discreetly. On the surface, he was standing quietly on the spot with his both hands behind his back, as though an expert unsullied with worldly affairs. He glanced at Gu Mu calmly, and his voice was completely tranquil and devoid of emotions.

"I wonder if, with my strength, will killing you...."

"....be as easy as slaughtering a chicken?"

Chapter 281

Crimson Flame Lotus Seed

Silence.

The entire environment was devoid of sound.

Gu Mu's face paled.

He saw the speed his 'senior granduncle' displayed, and if the other party were to use this speed against him, he probably won't even last for a breath!

That is to say.... Killing him is indeed not any harder than slaughtering a chicken!

Upon recalling the fact that he had tried to get violent with such an expert, cold sweat drenched his back immediately.

It was fortunate that the other party had recognized him, and that there was a form of kinship between them. Otherwise, even though he was an envoy of the headquarter, he would definitely have been reduced to a corpse in an instant.

The other party was an expert of an entirely different level, and given he didn't attempt to retaliate when Gu Mu provoked him earlier on, why would he need to fool him just to take his life? Rather, that would just sully his status.

"Senior granduncle, I was too skeptical, please forgive me!"

Upon understanding this fact, Gu Mu bowed in apology.

If killing him was as easy as killing a chicken, there should be no need for the Senior granduncle to play mind games with him if he really wished to slaughter him.

"I was traveling around the world when I passed by Red Lotus City and noticed that the Great Herb King was afflicted with the Contract Gu. Thus, I saved him, and from him, I heard about the conflict over the seat of the Hall Master in the Poison Hall branch. Unable to bear the sight of the younger generation of poison masters killing

one another over such a minor matter, I came here with the intention of resolving the conflict!"

Staring at the skies, benevolence shone through Zhang Xuan's eyes.

"This...."

Upon hearing that the other party came here for such a reason, Liao Xun and the others felt embarrassed.

To think that they had believed that he was a fraud hankering for some treasure.... Such thoughts appear ludicrous now that they recalled about it.

No wonder he spoke of conducting an examination the moment he arrived and declared that the most outstanding poison master would become the Hall Master. Through such, they would be able to avoid unnecessary conflict and trouble.

Gu Mu came to a realization as well. He had been thinking why his senior granduncle, despite his position, would choose to impersonate as the envoy. In the end, it was because he was unwilling to see fellow poison masters killing one another.

Upon realizing this fact, Gu Mu couldn't help but be impressed with the other party. Probably, only a true poison master, one who had an intense love for this occupation would be able to possess such magnanimity.

"Alright, since the real envoy is here, it's meaningless for me to remain here. Thus, I'll be taking my leave!"

Shaking his head, Zhang Xuan turned around and walked out of the Poison Hall.

The reason why the others took in his words so easily was that they were still awed by the Heaven's Path Movement Art. As time went by, they would realize the many loopholes in his words.

However, Zhang Xuan's motive here was to browse through the books. Now that he had accomplished his primary aim, and that the real envoy had arrived, remaining here would do nothing but increase the chances of his disguise being seen through. In that case, he might as well leave immediately.

After leaving the perimeter of the poison mist, he would be able to summon the

Howling Firmament Beast and leave this place for good.

"Senior granduncle, please save me...."

Seeing the other party turn around to leave without talking about his illness, Gu Mu's complexion turned pale. He knew that his doubt had offended the other party, so he hurried forward and kneeled to the floor.

All experts had their own dignity.

From the moment he arrived, Gu Mu has been antagonizing him, even making a move against him. Furthermore, when the other party offered to help him out of goodwill, he refused to believe him and doubted his intentions. It was no wonder why the other party was displeased.

His temper could already be considered good for not teaching Gu Mu a lesson there and then.

"I require my patients to be unconscious when treating them. I understand that you're worried about your safety, and I don't blame you for not believing me!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

The other party was clearly angry from his tone, and he didn't seem to intend to help him. Thus, Gu Mu hesitated for a moment before gritting his teeth and sending a telepathic message, "Senior granduncle, wait a moment! It was merely a pretense that the headquarter sent me to nominate a new Hall Master and stabilize the situation in the branch; the truth is that the [Crimson Flame Lotus Seed] in this branch has matured!"

"Crimson Flame Lotus Seed?"

"That's right. The Crimson Flame Lotus Seed lives in the depths of the volcano, and it absorbs the strength of the earth veins for its growth. If a cultivator were to consume it, their chances of breaking through the Zhizun realm bottleneck to reach higher realms would be increased by 20%! It is precisely because I'm stuck at this bottleneck that I took the initiative to apply for this mission."

Gu Mu spoke of everything without withholding any information.

"I know that given senior granduncle's strength, this object is useless to you. Even so,

it would be beneficial to your disciples and students if they were to consume it."

"It can increase the chances of breaking through Zhizun by 20%?" Zhang Xuan was astonished.

A breakthrough in cultivation depended on one's will, faith, accumulation, and cultivation technique.... Pills are considered as supplements, and most medicinal herbs weren't very effective for helping to raise one's cultivation.

Yet, the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed increased the chances of breaking through the Zhizun realm by a full 20%. If Zhang Xuan didn't hear this news from a Zhizun realm expert himself, he wouldn't dare to believe it to be true.

Even though 20% may not seem to be much, such effectiveness was already considered to be amazing by cultivators. Many would kill to lay their hands on the seed.

Zhizun realm was the pinnacle of being a Fighter, but it wasn't the terminal point of one's cultivation. In the vast world out there, there were countless experts who had surpassed the Zhizun realm.

A single Crimson Flame Lotus Seed can increase the possibility of one's breakthrough by a staggering 20%, so it is definitely considered a priceless treasure.

Zhang Xuan didn't expect to find such a valuable object in this Poison Hall branch.

"Alright, speak of your request!"

Knowing that the other party must have his motives for this matter, Zhang Xuan turned to look at him.

"I only hope that senior granduncle can lend a helping hand to cure my physical trauma. As for the lotus seed, I only require one for my breakthrough, and I'll present the rest to senior granduncle!"

Gu Mu said.

Gu Mu knew that given his current physical condition, even if he were to obtain the lotus seed, it would be impossible for him to reach higher realms. If that was the case, he might as well trade the seeds in return for treatment.

Besides, even though the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed was good stuff, it wasn't that easily obtainable. Otherwise, the old Hall Master wouldn't have died so abruptly.

Other people may not be aware of the cause of the death of the old Poison Hall, but Gu Mu was in the know. The branch had written and submitted a report on the old Hall Master's death, and Gu Mu happened to see its content by coincidence.

The rumors outside claiming that he died due to an illness were false. Rather, it was because the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed had matured and in the midst of picking it, the old Hall Master was burnt to ashes by the Earthen Flames.

Given how even a Zhizun expert was burnt to ashes by the flames, it was likely that Gu Mu would require the help of his senior granduncle to obtain that lotus seed.

Thus, after some contemplation, he decided to inform the other party of this news and make a deal.

Gu Mu knew that an expert of the other party's level wouldn't treat him poorly in consideration of the latter's status after knowing of the news.

"Alright!"

Zhang Xuan nodded.

Zhang Xuan had already intended to treat Gu Mu from the start, and now that there would be a reward, there was no reason for him to turn the other party down

"So.... When do we begin?"

Seeing the other party agree, Gu Mu was delighted. "Are there any preparations that need to be done?"

"There's no need for any preparations, we can start now!"

Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

The longer he dragged the matter, the likelier a twist would occur in the situation. It was best for Zhang Xuan to get it over and done with.

"Alright!" Upon hearing that the other party would conduct the treatment now, Gu Mu

was overjoyed. "I'll be depending on senior granduncle then!"

After which, he raised his hands.

Padah!

Knocking himself on his head, his body went limp and fell to the floor.

"Ah?"

Seeing that the other party had knocked himself unconscious, Zhang Xuan glanced downward to look at the bag of [Soul Numbing Powder] in his hands. Helpless, Zhang Xuan could only place it back into his storage ring.

"I was intending to use this. To think that you would be even more reckless than the Great Herb King...."

The [Soul Numbing Powder], which can send a person unconscious, is extremely useful for his 'unique medical techniques'. Thus, before setting off, he asked for plenty of it from the Great Herb King.

In any case, the object wasn't expensive, and the Great Herb King was also willing to do Zhang Xuan this favor. Thus, he gave him over twenty packets of it.

He was intending to test the effects of the powder, but by the time he managed to take it out, the other party had already knocked himself out.

That was way too fast!

However, this was good as well. In any case, he was unconscious, and this spared Zhang Xuan some effort.

Stepping forward to the unconscious Gu Mu, Zhang Xuan shook his hands and a few silver needles appeared in his palm.

A detailed description of the other party's physical condition was formed when the other party made a move on him earlier, so there was no need for Zhang Xuan to diagnose him once more.

With a flick of his fingers, the silver needles flew toward Gu Mu's body. Zhang Xuan's

movements were light and nimble, as though a butterfly.

Gu Mu's physical condition was largely different from that of the Great Herb King.

The latter had his foundations damaged by the Contract Gu, resulting in his declining health, whereas the former used poison excessively to stimulate his acupoints so as to raise his cultivation, during which, the poison seeped into his body and began to destroy his physical functions.

The former required the nourishment of the Heaven's Path zhenqi whereas the latter merely required Zhang Xuan to locate the area where the poison accumulated and use the Heaven's Path zhenqi to expel it from his body to solve the issue straightforwardly.

In fact, the treatment for Gu Mu's condition was much easier than that of the Great Herb King.

Tzzzzzzz!

The Heaven's Path zhenqi flowed through the silver needle toward the areas where the poison aura accumulated. Soon, the sound of flowing water could be heard from Gu Mu's body, and black water flowed out from his fingers and toes.

"Is this.... the poison aura hidden in his body?"

"Is it being forced out just like that?"

Looking at the situation, Liao Xun and the others widened their eyes in disbelief.

Coming into contact with poison on a daily basis, they understood the difficulty of expelling poison from one's body.

Some poison aura, once seeped into the body, can never be removed regardless of the valuable herbs one consume or how long one tries.

This was precisely the reason why even though poison masters were fearsome existences, their lifespan tended to be extremely short. Reaching fifty to sixty years of age was already a huge achievement for them.

Even though they didn't have any visible conditions, there were already numerous problems within their bodies. The poisons that they came into contact with were

already slowly gnawing at them from within.

They thought that there was no cure for them, but to think that the senior before them was able to resolve this trauma easily.

If he is able to expel the potent poison contained in the envoy's body so easily, doesn't it mean that he can treat us with ease as well?

Thus, they started staring at Zhang Xuan with fiery eyes.

Oblivious to the crowd's reaction, Zhang Xuan was immersed in the matter at hand. Every single needle was pierced accurately at areas where the poison aura was hidden within his body. Before long, he shook his hands, and all of the silver needles flew back to him.

Then, he swung his arms in a grand fashion.

Gu Mu slowly roused into consciousness.

"This...."

Opening his eyes, Gu Mu detected the changes within his body immediately.

Before, when his body was affected by the poison aura, he felt as though he was weighed down by gigantic shackles. Every single movement and action he made felt difficult. But now, as though all of the shackles were removed, his body felt as light as a feather.

Even without checking his condition with his zhenqi, he knew that the other party had pulled him back from the gates of hell.

"Senior granduncle, thank you for saving my life!"

Thus, he knelt to the floor once more. This time, it wasn't out of fear for the other party's strength, but in earnest respect for the other party's capability and assistance.

Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually, "Your condition is more severe than I thought, and you will require three treatments before the problem can be completely solved. Thus, there's no need for you to be thankful to me. It's not too late to say such words after you are completely cured!"

Zhang Xuan hadn't received the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed, and he wasn't out of danger either. Thus, Zhang Xuan left himself a bargaining chip, choosing not to cure the other party in a single go, in case the other party reneged on his words.

Chapter 282

Heaven's Path Poison Art

"Yes!"

Gu Mu knew that his physical condition had already deteriorated to the worst possible state, so he thought it would take several months to treatment for the other party to alleviate his situation. Yet, contrary to his expectations, the other party said that three treatments were sufficient. Thus, he couldn't help but feel amazed by his 'senior granduncle' once more.

"Your current condition shouldn't pose any problem to you in the short term, so I will arrange for the other two treatments at a later date. Also, I'll leave the matter regarding the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed up to you! After all, you're the envoy, so I will stay out of this matter!"

The carrot and stick each has to be employed at the right moments for it to be useful. Knowing that Gu Mu was completely impressed by him, Zhang Xuan wasn't worried about being attacked by him again. Thus, as he spoke, he walked up and sat at the centermost position in the hall.

Gu Mu nodded before turning to Liao Xun and the others, "Other than the Vice Hall Masters and the elders, the rest of you can leave now!"

"Yes!"

No one dared to disobey the words of the envoy. Soon, only the four elders and the three Vice Hall Masters remained in the room.

"I'm here for two matters!"

Flinging his sleeves, Gu Mu scanned the surroundings.

Even though he behaved as an obedient junior before Zhang Xuan, acting cautiously and subserviently, it was a fact that he was still a Zhizun realm pinnacle expert and a 3-star pinnacle poison master. Destroying this branch didn't mean anything at all to

him.

His absolute strength granted him unparalleled authority, and no one dared to talk back to him.

"Envoy, please speak!"

Liao Xun and the others quickly bowed.

"Firstly, I will choose the new Hall Master. Secondly, I am here to pick the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed, which should have matured by now." Gu Mu said.

"Crimson Flame Lotus Seed...."

Liao Xun and the others shuddered, their faces turning pale at the same time.

"Crimson Flame Lotus lives in the regions where the earth flames burn, and it feeds on lethal poison to nourish itself. Both the flower and the leaves contain lethal poison, and they are ideal ingredients to concocting poison. However, despite the lethal poison on the other parts of the lotus and its surroundings, its seeds remain untainted. On the contrary, it is an unparalleled treasure for cultivators trying to surpass Zhizun realm. The reason why the Red Lotus branch was established several thousand of years ago at this spot was to monopolize this lotus."

With an authoritative tone, Gu Mu spoke, "Now that the lotus seed has matured, I'll take the seeds and leave the flower and leaves to you. I presume that you have no problems with this, right?"

"There's.... no problem!"

Liao Xun and the others smiled bitterly as they nodded.

The envoy had already spoken, and the 'senior granduncle' was observing beside. Even if they had a problem with his words, they wouldn't dare to voice it out!

"That's good. How much longer will it take before the lotus seeds mature?"

Seeing the lack of opposition to the matter, Gu Mu nodded his head in satisfaction before asking.

He chose this period of time to come after having estimated the maturing of the lotus seed, but the specific date that it would fully mature eluded him.

"Reporting to the envoy, there's still ten days to its maturity!"

Liao Xun replied.

"Ten days? Good. Prepare the best room in the Poison Hall for my senior granduncle. In this ten days, I will pick out the new Hall Master!" Gu Mu said.

"Yes!"

Everyone nodded in response to the envoy's instructions.

Knowing that it would take ten days before the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed mature, Zhang Xuan decided to make use of this time to digest the information which he had just absorbed to analyze the poison aura within his body.

In any case, since he hadn't yet cured the other party completely, so even if Gu Mu were to realize a lapse in his statements and conclude that this 'senior granduncle' of his was a fake, it was unlikely he would do anything to him.

Besides, he had displayed numerous incredible feats which even 5-star poison masters were incapable of. Most probably, he wouldn't dare to pick a fight with him either.

....

Ignoring the issue of selecting the new Hall Master, Zhang Xuan sat quietly in his room after instructing the Great Herb King and Butler Lu to guard his door. He was analyzing the books which he had gathered, and his mind operated at maximum efficiency.

"Correct!"

Muttering under his breath, the countless books on poison on the shelves merged into one and formed a thick secret manual.

Knowing that this was the [Heaven's Path Poison Art] that he wanted to compile, he grabbed it lightly and started browsing through it without hesitation.

"Poison is a type of medicine. It can kill, and can also save lives...."

Written on the first page of the book was an introduction to poisons.

This Heaven's Path Poison Art manual formed with the books on poison here was clearly much more advanced, detailed, and profound than the one formed with the books in Tianxuan Kingdom. Zhang Xuan's understanding of poisons deepened with each page he read.

After an unknown period of time, Zhang Xuan's eyes suddenly opened. The confusion which could be seen in his eyes before was replaced with clarity.

"To think that the study of poison is so vast and profound as well!"

Recalling the content he has just learned moments ago, Zhang Xuan felt amazed.

It was no wonder why poison masters were the subjects of fear for countless people. In terms of the complexity, it wasn't inferior to apothecary, blacksmiths, and the other Upper Nine Paths occupations. In terms of offensive ability, it might even exceed them.

For example, with Zhang Xuan's current cultivation, he would definitely be unable to match a Zongshi realm intermediate stage cultivator. However, if he were to utilize poison, he could easily kill a Zongshi realm pinnacle expert!

Or perhaps, even a Zhizun realm expert!

Of course, poison wasn't omnipotent either. Without a sufficiently high cultivation, one would be unable to conceal the killing intent within them, and their attempt at poisoning the other party would be easily detected. If so, they would probably be killed before they could even do anything.

Furthermore, there were some formidable poisons which required a poison master to use his blood essence and zhenqi to trigger its effects.

Even if a person who wasn't a poison master or didn't possess sufficiently high cultivation were to be given a potent poison, he would be unable to utilize it. On the contrary, he might even be killed by it instead.

It is just like how everyone knows about the might of the atomic bomb, but without sufficient knowledge and strength, it is impossible to control. Even if you were given

one, you wouldn't be able to threaten anyone with it. On the other hand, you might even put yourself in danger by wielding it.

Potent poison is just like a powerful weapon. Without sufficient strength and mastery, putting aside coming into contact with them, even if one was several hundred meters, or even several thousand meters away, it was possible for him to be poisoned to death by it!

It is an incomparably dangerous tool!

Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that if he formulated a potent poison, he wouldn't have to fear even Zhizun realm pinnacle experts. But from the looks of it, he had been overthinking.

"While I don't intend to harm anyone through poison, I can avoid being harmed by others with this knowledge!"

The strength that a poison master could potentially wield alarmed Zhang Xuan.

While he didn't intend to kill anyone with poison, he had to be careful to not allow anyone to obtain a chance of poisoning him.

It was just like the poison aura in Zhang Xuan's body. If he had been guarded against all poison masters beforehand, he wouldn't have landed himself in such a difficult situation.

"According to the manual, the highest level that a poison master can attain is to create the Poison Body. It is entirely possible for me to cultivate it!"

Zhang Xuan smiled.

Just like any other occupation, being a poison master is heavily reliant on talent.

Talented poison masters would possess Innate Poison Body. Not only does the Innate Poison Body grant one incredible sensitivity to poison, it would also give them extraordinary resistance toward it. That is to say, if a poison master possesses this constitution, even if he were to consume the poison concocted by other poison masters, he wouldn't suffer any effects or damage, as though eating an ordinary meal.

Even more so, rumors have it that a person with such a constitution can absorb the

energy contained within the poison they consume in order to raise their cultivation.

Of course, this constitution is incredibly rare. Even within billions of poison masters, there might not even be a single one.

Similar to Zhao Ya's Pure Yin Body, one had to be born with this constitution to possess it, so it was impossible for Zhang Xuan to cultivate the Innate Poison Body. However, the countless secret arts that poison masters cultivate contained in the books of the Poison Hall had formed a corresponding cultivation technique alongside the Heaven's Path Poison Art.

And if he were to cultivate according to the cultivation technique, even if he is unable to reach the level of the Innate Poison Body, he would be able to significantly increase his physical immunity to poison. This was much more efficient than the special techniques poison masters utilize to temper their physique to make it more resilient toward poison.

"I should give it a try!"

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan willed for the book on the cultivation technique to appear and started browsing through it.

After an unknown period of time, he exhaled a mouthful of turbid air and stood up all of a sudden.

Geji! Geji! Geji!

The bones throughout his body crackled as though fried beans and his aura evolved in an instant.

"Even though it pales in comparison to Innate Poison Body, it grants me immunity toward ordinary poisons. In my current state, consuming poisons formulated by a 3-star poison master wouldn't hurt me in any way!"

Sensing the changes in his body, Zhang Xuan smiled.

There was an obvious change in his body after cultivating the Heaven's Path Poison Art and his immunity toward poison had increased.

Even though it wasn't the Innate Poison Body, he had achieved perfect immunity to

poisons concocted by 3-star poison masters and below.

"More importantly.... After cultivating the Heaven's Path Poison Art, on top of curing people and inducing a breakthrough in their cultivation, my Heaven's Path zhenqi can also be turned into lethal poison with a single thought, killing an enemy instantaneously!"

Rather than his physical body, the greatest change from cultivating the Heaven's Path Poison Art was actually his zhenqi.

The purity of the Heaven's Path zhenqi made it an unparalleled tool in healing injuries, rejuvenating one's stamina, augmenting one's life force, and inducing a breakthrough in cultivation....

And after cultivating the Heaven's Path Poison Art, Zhang Xuan was now capable of converting the Heaven's Path zhenqi into a lethal aura that was impossible to withstand. Once it seeps into one's veins, even a Zhizun realm expert would be unable to neutralize it.

As clear as spring water, it was capable of diving into any holes or acupoints within the human body. Even if one were to know where it was, without sufficiently pure zhenqi, it would be impossible to expel.

This was no different from terminal stage cancer. Even if one knew the cause and solution to the problem, it was impossible to treat.

As expected of the Heaven's Path zhenqi. Life and death hinged on just a single thought.

Zhang Xuan didn't know that it could wield such an incredible power.

"Now that I'm done cultivating the Poison Body, I should check on the poison aura!"

Having finished cultivating the Poison Body, Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply. He turned his attention once more to the poison aura hidden in the depths of his body.

In the past, he understood very little about poison, and thus, he was unable to ascertain what the poison hiding in his body was. Now that his knowledge was comparable to a 3-star poison master, such that Gu Mu might not even be a match for him, he finally possessed the capability to look into the origin of the poison aura and

find a way to expel it.

Upon entering the state of Heart of Tranquil Water, Zhang Xuan's mind began clocking at a rapid speed.

"This poison aura can hide within my bloodstream and escape the pursuit of my Heaven's Path zhenqi...."

As he examined the poison aura hidden in his body, books after books of poison appeared before his eyes, and countless knowledge flooded his mind.

There was more than a million type of poison in the world, and every single one of them had a different concoction and cure. Even the slightest mistake could cause a huge difference in the result.

Thus, Zhang Xuan didn't panic. He took his time and sieved through the countless books in the library slowly.

"Green Spirit Poison, that's not it! Phantom Shadow Toxic, that's not right either! Clear Snake Venom, that doesn't seem like it...."

Zhang Xuan compared the poison based on its color and traits to those listed in the books one by one. After a period of time, Zhang Xuan suddenly halted. His face paled, and his eyes were filled with disbelief.

"To think that it would be this. How.... How is this possible?"

Clarifications:

A Heaven's Path (perfect) cultivation technique is formed along with the Heaven's Path Poison Art. While the book is called Heaven's Path Poison Art, the cultivation technique is also called Heaven's Path Poison Art.

Cultivating Heaven's Path Poison Art will grant you the Poison Body.

Chapter 283

Lava Beast [2in1]

This is.... the Innate Fetal Poison!

It's a type of Innate Poison!

Upon identifying the poison, Zhang Xuan felt as if he could go insane.

Innate Fetus Poison is a poison that affects a fetus in its mother's womb. The poison melds with one's blood and soul, making it impossible to cure.

Zhao Ya possessed the Innate Pure Yin Body and, after awakening her unique constitution, gained overwhelming strength and incredible beauty befitting of a queen. On the other hand, Yuan Tao possessed the Innate Emperor Bloodline and, after its awakening, gained an invincible defense, becoming a human-shaped meat shield....

Zhang Xuan had always been envious of them, and now, he realized that he possessed an innate constitution as well, just that....

These are all innate constitutions, but why the huge difference?

Other people's innate constitution allow their cultivation to soar, but his innate constitution was instead threatening to claim his life....

"Innate Fetal Poison is a unique poison that is planted into the body of a pregnant mother. It fuses with the fetus within her before it is born and causes an innate lack of Fetal Vitality. Those who have been inflicted with this poison rarely live beyond thirty, and this constitution is also termed as the Constitution of Premature Death.... and there is no cure for it."

Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears.

Other people possess overpowered innate physical constitution, while I possess the innate Constitution of Premature Death....

Premature death your head!

Is it even possible to pull an even bigger prank on me?

If I won't live beyond thirty, doesn't that mean that I only have a decade more to live? My days are numbered....

Suppressing his dismay, he searched through the books in the Library of Heaven's Path and found seven to eight other books with descriptions on Innate Fetal Poison, but.... these descriptions tallied with the poison aura hidden in his body.

That meant that without a doubt, Zhang Xuan was inflicted with this poison.

Just that....

"To be capable of planting the poison in the mother and have her pass it to her offspring without being noticed, the one who planted the poison must be at minimum a 7-star poison master. But I am only an orphan, there shouldn't be any need to go through so much trouble...."

After confirming the poison in his body, Zhang Xuan brooded for a moment before doubts started appearing in his mind.

Having read so many books on poison in the Poison Hall, Zhang Xuan had gained an in-depth understanding of the usage of poison. For one to plant an Innate Fetal Poison into a person without being noticed, the poison master must be above 7-star.

He would be either an 8-star or even a 9-star poison master.

A poison master of this level already possesses unparalleled cultivation. Why would he waste so much effort just to deal with an orphan like him?

His previous self was just an insignificant figure living in a backward place like Tianxuan Kingdom. Being an orphan, he was so poor that he did not have a single cent in belonging. Nothing about him was exceptional, except for his cultivation before he reached eighteen. But after that, he fell behind and even earned a reputation as the worst teacher in the entire history of Hongtian Academy.

How can a figure like him be worthy of the attention of a poison master standing at the pinnacle of the pyramid.... Isn't this inconceivable?

"This poison fuses with one's body, and under normal circumstances, one wouldn't notice it until his death. It is due to the Heaven's Path zhenqi that I cultivated being too pure that it was forced to reveal its presence. Even so, there's no way for me to treat it...."

Zhang Xuan felt helpless.

The first time he noticed this poison, he thought that someone had planned to murder him, and his previous self was killed by that person. But from the looks of it now, he had been overthinking.

This poison had accompanied him from birth, and it was hidden so deeply that even a 9-star poison master wouldn't be able to notice it. Without a doubt, this would have been a perfect murder. Even if Zhang Xuan were to die, it would be impossible for anyone to pinpoint the murderer. In fact, even if Zhang Xuan were a poison master it would have been almost impossible for him to notice the poison aura. However, the Heaven's Path zhenqi that he cultivated was simply too pure. Flowing through his meridians and blood, no impurity was able to remain hidden. As such, it was forced out of its hiding.

Even so, Zhang Xuan could do nothing about it. Nourished during the pregnancy of its former host, it had already gained intelligence such that even the Heaven's Path zhenqi was incapable of expelling it. Furthermore, it would grow more and more potent with the passing of time, and Zhang Xuan would surely die before reaching the age of thirty.

The heck!

What in the world is this! Other people are blessed with golden fingers which allow them to reign supreme in their worlds, but he was given a time bomb instead. Furthermore, it was the type that straps tightly to you, in order to ensure your death.

It was likely that this poison had played a part in the death of his previous self. Under uncontrollable depression and a strong will to end his life, the poison aura acted up prematurely, claiming his soul. However, Zhang Xuan's transcension occurred before the poison aura could corrode the body fully.

Zhang Xuan's sudden fall as a genius, due to his cultivation stagnating, was also related to this poison aura.

Before reaching Zhenqi realm pinnacle, his previous self advanced swiftly in his

cultivation, and he was reputed as a genius that appeared only once every hundred years. However, he ended up being stopped before the gates of Pigu realm for countless years. The reason for this was that the poison aura fused with his entire body, and this severely suppressed the might of his once murky zhenqi.

Unless one achieved the level of purity of Heaven's Path zhenqi, it was impossible for him to overcome the suppression of the poison aura and reach higher realms. Given the murky zhenqi that one could only cultivate practicing the inferior cultivation techniques in Tianxuan Kingdom, there was no way his previous self could have reached Pigu realm.

"All poisons must have a cure. However, the tier of this Poison Hall is too low. Maybe I would be able to find a solution within the books at a higher tier branch...."

Even though Zhang Xuan felt dismal at his condition, he wasn't ready to give up.

After comprehending the Heaven's Path Poison Art, Zhang Xuan had gained an extensive understanding of poison.

Every cause is linked to an effect, and similarly, there isn't such a thing as an incurable disease in the world. Even though the books Zhang Xuan compiled in the Library of Heaven's Path stated that there wasn't a solution to the poison, that didn't mean that it was truly incurable. He could perhaps find a remedy in another higher tier Poison Hall.

"This Innate Fetal Poison will not act up before I reach thirty. That is to say.... I have to find a remedy within the next ten years!"

As though a dagger, the Heart of Tranquil Water state sliced away all negative thoughts from Zhang Xuan's mind. Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

He had transcended for barely more than a month, and he had already reached Half-Zongshi up from Zhenqi realm pinnacle. It was hard to imagine what heights he would reach in the next ten years, and by then, he might have already found a cure.

There was no need for him to panic.

But the matter nevertheless weighed down on him heavily, exerting a constant stress on him.

Often, what happens in practice do not obey logical theories. It took Zhang Xuan great luck to live once more, and he didn't want to die for such an absurd reason.

"Summon Gu Mu!"

Standing up, Zhang Xuan instructed the Great Herb King and Butler Lu, who were guarding the entrance to his room.

"Senior granduncle, did you call me?"

Not too long after, Gu Mu walked into the room.

"Sit!" Zhang Xuan gestured. "The reason why I had you come over is that I have something I would like to ask you!"

Gu Mu sat upright immediately. "Senior granduncle, please speak!"

In the last few days, Zhang Xuan had taken out some time to conduct a second treatment for the person before him. After which, the latter felt rejuvenated, and he felt as though he had returned back to the time ten years ago when his stamina was at his peak. Endless energy seemed to gush through him.

After two treatments, he knew that this senior granduncle before him possessed heavenly means. He had long been fully impressed by the latter, and he didn't dare to hold any doubts or vile thoughts toward him.

"Have you heard of the Innate Fetal Poison?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Gu Mu came from Xuanyuan Kingdom Poison Hall branch, and he had read through profound secret manuals. It was possible that he might know something that Zhang Xuan didn't.

"Innate Fetal Poison?"

Gu Mu hesitated for a moment before answering, "I've heard of this poison. It is a lethal poison which is implanted into the womb of a woman, and the poison fuses itself with the fetus along with its growth. There's no cure for the poison!"

"No cure?"

"Yes!" Gu Mu nodded. However, he suddenly thought of something, and hesitation flickered on his face. "But...."

"But what?" Zhang Xuan stared at him intently.

"I've heard a rumor, but I can't ascertain its authenticity!"

After hesitating for a moment longer, Gu Mu said, "It is said that the greatest man in history, Empyrean Kong shi, was afflicted with Innate Fetal Poison. No one knew how he resolved it, but he lived to ten thousand years old and passed away from old age."

Empyrean Kong shi was known as the number one master teacher in the world, the founder of the Master Teacher Pavilion. He was revered by countless people in the world, and there wasn't a single master teacher or master teacher apprentice who didn't know of him.

"Oh?"

Zhang Xuan had once heard Huang Yu spoke of him and he felt immense respect for the legendary figure as well.

However, he didn't expect that senior to be afflicted with the Innate Fetal Poison as well, to have been in a similar predicament as him.

However, since he managed to overcome it, it meant that there was a cure for the poison.

"However, this is only a legend spread among the civilians. If one wants to know about the matters surrounding Kong shi, one would probably have to pay a visit to the Master Teacher Pavilion as a master teacher. Poison masters like us only know a thing or two about him from the rumors.... But, why would senior granduncle ask about this?" Gu Mu asked doubtfully.

"I am just casually asking about it!"

Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually. At this moment, Zhang Xuan decided to pay a visit to the Master Teacher Pavilion right after he settled the things here.

An autobiography would be compiled on the life of outstanding figures in each occupation and kept in their respective guilds so that the later generations can learn

from their example.

Since Kong shi was the founder of the Master Teacher Pavilion, it was likely that his records were in the Master Teacher Pavilion.

If he was truly afflicted with Innate Fetal Poison and if he eventually lived to the end of his full lifespan, it would mean that he had managed to resolve the poison.

If there was a precedent of success, Zhang Xuan would need not panic that much.

"What's the situation in the Poison Hall?"

Having a plan in mind, Zhang Xuan decided not to linger on this topic.

"After several rounds of examinations, I have already decided on the new Hall Master; he is the Vice Hall Master Liao Xun! Also, the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed is nearing maturity and we can pick it tomorrow."

Gu Mu replied.

"Tomorrow? Great!" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

He had obtained the knowledge he required and had also identified the poison he was suffering from. As such, there was no further need for him to remain here, and it was best for him to leave as soon as possible.

After Gu Mu exited the room, Zhang Xuan continued to look through the books in the Library of Heaven's Path to augment his knowledge, and he took time to reinforce his cultivation as well.

Even though there weren't sufficient Zongshi realm cultivation techniques in the Red Lotus City to form the Heaven's Path Divine Art, there were sufficient lines of information that were correct, allowing Zhang Xuan to start on the next level of cultivation.

After several tries, Zhang Xuan was able to clearly sense the Half-Zongshi zhenqi in his body growing more and more powerful, and he was barely a step away from stepping into the Zongshi realm.

Even though the Library of Heaven's Path was capable of peering through the flaws of

all objects and beings, Zhang Xuan nevertheless required a stable foundation to reach greater heights. Thus, he had been studying whenever he had the time, and in just ten days, his knowledge had expanded by more than twofold. His understanding of beast taming and poisons had deepened significantly, and even without the assistance of the Library of Heaven's Path, he could be considered as a knowledgeable veteran.

At the same time, Zhang Xuan practiced a round of the Heaven's Path Fist Art, Heaven's Path Leg Art, and Heaven's Path Spear Art each once more.

These skills were the most fundamental of all but were capable of bringing out the strength in one's body perfectly. They boost Zhang Xuan's abilities in offense significantly, allowing him to stand against some Zongshi realm intermediate cultivators, and perhaps, even kill them.

Of course, if Zhang Xuan were to use the Library of Heaven's Path ability to detect flaws and the Heaven's Path Movement Art along with it, by going all out at the expense of his own body, he might be able to kill even a Zongshi realm pinnacle.

It was completely unheard of for a Half-Zongshi to defeat a Zongshi realm pinnacle in a straightforward fight. Even the most talented genius in the Master Teacher Pavilion would be incapable of such a feat.

"Senior granduncle, the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed has matured!"

Zhang Xuan spent his entire time cultivating, and at the daybreak of the second day, Gu Mu knocked on his door.

"Alright!"

Nodding his head, Zhang Xuan stood up.

Zhang Xuan had waited ten days for this treasure which could increase the chances of breaking through Zhizun realm by 20%, and finally.... it had become ready for picking!

"The Red Lotus Range is a gigantic volcano, and our Poison Hall branch is built at the opening of the volcano. When the branch was built back then, a formation master was invited to build a formation to seal the volcano and gather Earthen Flames to nourish the Crimson Flame Lotus."

Even though Liao Xun had become the official Hall Master, he didn't dare to pull his

rank before the duo. On their way there, he explained the situation to them respectfully.

"Envoy, senior granduncle, this way!"

Liao Xun had also followed Gu Mu's way of addressing Zhang Xuan.

Proceeding forward, the trio soon arrived at an altar.

"The mouth of the volcano is hidden below!"

Liao Xun pointed.

Zhang Xuan glanced downward.

A gigantic altar with a radius of more than a hundred meters laid before them. From afar, it looked ancient. Rather than an entrance to the volcano, it seemed more like a piece of barren ruin.

Zhang Xuan was perplexed, but having heard the history of the branch, Zhang Xuan knew that there was likely to be a formation in place, so he kept quiet.

And just as he deduced, Liao Xun stepped forward to the altar. With a flick of his hands, he whipped out the token representing his identity as the Hall Master and placed it in an opening at the center of the altar.

Hong long long!

The world spun, and the sight before them changed immediately.

A seemingly endless staircase that led downward appeared on the flat and vast altar.

"This way!"

Liao Xun led the way, and after walking down the staircase for nearly two hours, a vast underground palace appeared before them.

At the center of the palace was the huge mouth of the volcano. Scorching flames burned on the surface, and waves of heat gushed forth from it, making it grueling for anyone to approach.

Feeling the heat surging from within, Zhang Xuan's expression turned grim.

They had yet to enter through the opening but just the torrid air in the main hall was sufficient to cause any Pixue realm cultivator to collapse.

"Envoy, senior granduncle, that is the Crimson Flame Lotus!"

Stepping forward to the entrance of the volcano, Liao Xun pointed.

At the center of the volcano, amidst the searing lava, a crimson lotus floated. On it was a lotus pod filled with countless seeds, exuding a slight fragrance.

"How beautiful!"

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

The Crimson Lotus before him was two to three meters tall, and its entire surface was fiery-red, resembling raging flames.

It was several hundred meters away from their present location, but they could already feel the heat wave emitted by it searing their skin. Putting aside Zhang Xuan, even a Zhizun realm expert would find the heat hard to tolerate.

"How do we pick the lotus?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Not only was the heat wave emitted by the Crimson Lotus intolerable, the crux was that it was floating on the surface of the lava several hundred meters away from the shore. How can one reach it?

Step into the lava?

Even with the powerful Heaven's Path Golden Body, Zhang Xuan would be reduced to ashes the moment he stepped in!

Needless to say, the rest.

"I've no idea. My teacher was burnt to ashes while attempting to pick the lotus seed upon observing that it was nearing maturity...." Liao Xun shook his head sorrowfully.

The abrupt death of the old Hall Master was due to his attempt to pick the Crimson

Flame Lotus Seed.

"The Crimson Flame Lotus Seed matures once every century, and each time, someone would succeed. The headquarter has always received your tribute, so why would the old Hall Master be burned to death?"

Gu Mu asked doubtfully.

This Poison Hall branch had been guarding this lotus since its inception, and it wouldn't make sense for them to spend countless medicinal herbs to nourish it just to hand it over to the hands of another.

Besides, this branch had been supplying the headquarter with a certain amount of lotus seed every century, so they had to have a way to harvest it.

"We do have a way, but we're no longer able to utilize it. Look!"

Liao Xun smiled bitterly. Picking up a rock, he threw it straight toward the Crimson Flame Lotus.

He was a Zongshi realm pinnacle expert, and under the augmentation of zhenqi, the stone flew at an incredible speed with a screeching sound, as though it was tearing air apart.

"What are you doing...."

Seeing the other party throw a stone with such immense force toward the Crimson Flame Lotus, Gu Mu's expression darkened.

The Crimson Flame Lotus had matured, and upon being struck, it was highly likely it would fall into the lava. Once it fell in, it would be nearly impossible to find.

"Envoy, take a look!" Liao Xun said.

In the midst of their exchange, the stone was already right before the Crimson Flame Lotus. Just as it was about to strike the lotus, the lava surrounding the flower tremored violently and suddenly, and a bizarre creature flew upward. Opening its mouth, it swallowed the entire stone.

That bizarre creature was shaped like a snake, and it was several dozens of meters

long. Covered in a thick layer of bright red scales, it swam leisurely in the lava, creating an extremely peculiar sight.

"What is that?"

Gu Mu didn't expect such a bizarre creature to be swimming in the scorching lava. He pondered for a moment, and his eyes suddenly narrowed, "Can this be the Lava Beast that you brought up with the headquarter previously?"

Upon seeing the creature, he suddenly recalled the contents of the report the Red Lotus Range branch submitted to the headquarter previously.

Not only did the report talk about the abrupt death of the old Hall Master, it also spoke of a savage beast that lived in the lava around the lotus, and they have termed it as the Lava Beast.

He thought that it was just nonsense the other party came up with to avoid handing over the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed, and the possibility of it being true never flashed across his mind.

"Yes, this is the Lava Beast. The unique scales around it grants it tolerance to high heat, allowing it to live in the lava. Its strength is comparable to a Zhizun realm pinnacle expert...." Liao Xun flashed a bitter smile.

"To think that such a creature exists in the world!"

Gu Mu wasn't the only one shocked, Zhang Xuan was perplexed by the sight as well.

The temperature of the lava below was definitely above two thousand degree Celsius. They could never have imagined that such a huge creature would be able to survive such extreme conditions if they hadn't seen it for themselves.

"Indeed. This creature appeared all of the sudden, and for the past few years, it has been guarding the Crimson Red Lotus as though it was his property. Anyone who tries to approach it would have to suffer his attacks!"

Liao Xun explained.

"It is one thing if we are on the shore, but the lava is its haven. Furthermore.... it has reached the level of Zhizun realm pinnacle. Honestly, we are helpless before it!"

"This...."

Gu Mu's expression darkened.

Even though he had achieved Zhizun realm pinnacle as well, if he were to battle with this gigantic fellow in the lava.... There was a nine out of ten chance that he would die here.

"Does poison not work?"

Zhang Xuan couldn't resist asking.

The Poison Hall was adept at using poison, so it was plausible that they could kill the creature using it.

"The Lava Beast isn't afraid of even the searing Earthen Flames, so how can any ordinary poison be effective on it...." Liao Xun said.

The lava was about two thousand degree Celsius hot. Most poison would be reduced to ashes before it can even reach the lava, thus making it nigh impossible to use poison.

"We've tried all kinds of methods, except.... finding a beast tamer to tame it. Honestly speaking.... there doesn't seem to be any other solution!" Liao Xun shook his head. "However, this is our greatest secret, and the Poison Hall doesn't interact with any other occupations. It is highly likely that inviting a beast tamer will cause unnecessary trouble!"

The Poison Hall didn't possess any connections with the other occupations; there were some which were actually hostile to it.

Inviting people from another occupation here would mean having to reveal their den, and this could potentially bring them a catastrophe. If so, they would have wasted their years living in seclusion in the Red Lotus Range.

"That's right...."

Understanding this fact as well, Gu Mu shook his head.

Poison and brute force wouldn't work, and they couldn't hire a beast tamer either.... It was indeed a huge question how they could harvest the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed.

"Will beast tamers be able to subdue that fellow?"

Hearing the duo's conversation, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before speaking.

"Perhaps.... I can give it a try!"

Golden finger refers to the gifts/talents one receives upon transcending to an alternate world. For example, Zhang Xuan's Library of Heaven's Path can be considered as a golden finger.

Kong shi is most probably a reference toward Confucius, otherwise known as Kong Zi. He is a philosopher who had formulated a line of thoughts that became known as Confucianism. On top of that, he is also informally known as the first teacher.

Chapter 284

Go Down and Beat It Up

Upon hearing those words, Gu Mu and Liao Xun's eyes lit up, "Can it be that senior granduncle intends to subdue it?"

The person before them was an incredible expert who had surpassed the Zhizun realm. No matter how domineering this giant fellow was in the lava, if he were to make a move personally, he would be able to kill it effortlessly.

"It is just a small savage beast, it's not worthy of being my opponent!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head, revealing an expression full of disdain. However, on the inside, he was spurting blood.

Me, subdue it?

What a joke!

That is a Zhizun realm savage beast! Even if I were to face it on land, I will run as far as I can. To want me to subdue it....

If I were to really get closer, I would become a delectable meal for the other party.

"Then...."

The duo was perplexed.

"It isn't easy for a savage beast to achieve a Zhizun realm pinnacle cultivation. It would be a pity to kill it!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head, and a benevolent expression appeared on his face, "Gu Mu, since you're my junior, I'll give you this opportunity to tame this savage beast! Once it becomes your tamed beast, harvesting the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed will be easy!"

"Me.... tame it?"

Gu Mu was still wondering what ideas Zhang Xuan had in mind when he heard the other party's words. He staggered and nearly blacked out.

Even on land, it would be difficult for him to defeat this massive fellow. To face him in lava was equivalent to courting death!

To talk about taming the savage beast.... it would already be a huge blessing for him to not be the one who gets tamed!

"Senior granduncle, I know nothing about beast taming...." With a reddened face, Gu Mu shook his head hurriedly.

He had dedicated himself to the Way of Poison. Even though he had heard of beast taming, it was something very unfamiliar and foreign to him.

To tame a humongous fellow who has achieved the same cultivation realm....

Better not. I wish to live a much longer life.

"There's no need to worry about that, I can guide you!" Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up. With an imposing tone, he spoke, "Don't you believe your senior granduncle?"

"I dare not...." Shuddering, Gu Mu hurriedly bowed. Then, unable to hold back his curiosity, he asked, "Senior granduncle.... Can it be that you are well-versed in beast taming as well?"

Even though this senior granduncle of his didn't appear much older than him, his mastery of poison far surpassed him, and his understanding of the Way of Medicine didn't seem to be mediocre. Could it be that he is versed in the art of beast taming as well?

If that was the case, he would surely have been a legendary figure. But if that was the case, why hadn't he heard of him?

"I know a thing or two!"

Nodding his head, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back as he walked to the mouth of the volcano. The Lava Beast was swimming in the lava around the Crimson

Flame Lotus, resembling a gigantic snake. To harvest the seeds, it was impossible for them to get close without alarming it.

Turning around, Zhang Xuan stared at Gu Mu. "This is a Zhizun pinnacle savage beast, and countless people dream of taming such a savage beast. This is a good opportunity, are you really reluctant to grasp hold of it?"

"I...." Seeing the other party's serious expression, Gu Mu hesitated for a moment. Then, with a slightly reddened face, he asked, "Can I.... really tame it?"

Taming a savage beast of the same cultivation realm meant that his fighting prowess would be increased twofold. In truth, he was tempted by the idea.

On top of that, if it were to consume the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed, it was possible that it would be able to break through its bottleneck. At that time, with the strength of the human and the beast in unison, he would have a much better chance at exacting vengeance.

Just that.... Isn't taming savage beasts a skill that only beast tamers are capable of?

Guide me?

Even if you were to guide me, it is impossible for me to become a beast tamer instantly and be able to tame this incredible savage beast!

"If you follow my instructions carefully, taming it shouldn't be a problem!"

Sensing that the other party had been tempted by his offer, Zhang Xuan swung his sleeves and spoke indifferently, "The choice is yours. If you are unwilling to do so, we can drop the idea. It's just a Zhizun realm savage beast, I can kill it effortlessly. However.... If you miss this opportunity, there won't be a second chance."

"This...."

Gu Mu's eyes flickered with hesitation and doubt. But eventually, he gritted his teeth and nodded, "Alright, senior granduncle. What should I do.... Do I need to prepare anything?"

It was indeed a good opportunity for him. Not only did the savage beast rival him in strength, it did not fear poison. The moment he succeeded, his standing in the

Xuanyuan branch would rise greatly.

Even though Gu Mu had never tamed a savage beast, he had seen others do so. He knew that a beast tamer would have to prepare numerous items beforehand so as to attract the other party's attention and win its goodwill.

He would have to find a way to deepen his bond with it and gradually gain intimacy before it would submit to him.

"There's no need for it, and there's no time either!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head, "Since this fellow has decided to camp around this Crimson Flame Lotus, he must be extremely fond of it. No matter what it is that we prepare, it is impossible to be more attractive to it than this lotus. Besides, the lotus seed has already matured and it is ready for consumption. If we were to start making preparations now, by the time we're done, it would have already eaten all of the seeds."

"That...." Gu Mu was perplexed.

If we do not prepare any gifts for the Lava Beast, how will we attract its attention?

At this moment, the 'senior granduncle's' voice sounded once more.

"It's simple. You'll jump down right now and beat it up. After that, I will tell you how you should tame it!"

"Beat it up?"

Gu Mu's face turned green.

Other people would be thinking of ways to win the trust of the savage beast and move it. Yet, this senior granduncle asked me to attack it....

Won't we incur this gigantic fellow's wrath this way? Once this fellow bears hostility toward us, wouldn't it become impossible for me to tame it?

More importantly.... It is highly probable that I would be unable to return once I go down....

Are you sure that you are sending me to tame this savage beast, not to feed it?

Sensing his hesitation, Zhang Xuan knew what he was worried about. Thus, he reassured him, "Don't worry, I'm here. It won't be easy for that fellow to kill you."

"Yes!" Gu Mu clenched his jaws.

That's right, senior granduncle is a formidable figure who has surpassed Zhizun realm. With him here, how can I possibly be subdued by that mere Lava Beast?

Of course, if he were to know that this 'senior granduncle' of his had merely a Half-Zongshi cultivation realm and that he could easily crush him to death.... He would probably burst into tears.

Having made up his mind, Gu Mu took in a deep breath and flicked his wrist. The next moment, a sword appeared in his palm. Pumping the zhenqi in his body, he slashed at the ground several times swiftly, and the firm granite ground was immediately cut into tiles of similar sizes.

There were roughly seventy to eighty tiles, and each of them was a square of a chi wide.

He stacked those tiles up and placed them before Liao Xun.

"Hall Master Liao, I'll have to trouble you to build a footpath for me later on!"

"Alright!" Liao Xun nodded.

Even Zhizun realm pinnacle cultivators were incapable of flight. To fight with the Lava Beast from above the scorching lava, he had to build suitable footpaths.

By throwing these tiles into the lava, Gu Mu would be able to utilize the feedback between the granite and the lava to move about.

This is a feat that only Zhizun realm experts are capable of. A Zongshi wouldn't even be able to tolerate the heat wave, needless to say, tread above the lava.

"Senior granduncle.... I'll be going down now!"

Now that the preparations were in place, Gu Mu took in a deep breath.

Zhang Xuan waved casually in response.

Hu!

Upon seeing the senior granduncle's response, Gu Mu pumped his zhenqi to the maximum, and with a flick of his wrist, threw out a granite tile, and it landed on the surface of the lava. At the same time, he rushed forward and leaped toward the tile.

Stepping lightly on the tile, he was able to push himself upward once again.

Most Zhizun realm experts would have cultivated lightweight movement techniques, which allowed them to even tread across the surface of the water. As such, treading the denser lava wasn't a problem at all.

Sou!

Seeing the other party starting to descend, Liao Xun immediately estimated his landing spot and threw a tile over.

As though a dragonfly treading on water, he stepped on the granite tile and leaped upward once more. Just like that, he quickly arrived before the Lava Beast.

"Let's begin!"

Gathering the entire might of his body into his sword, Gu Mu roared and stabbed straight at the Lava Beast.

Since he was facing the Lava Beast, he had to give his all without reserve. Otherwise, the one who will end up dead would be him.

Roar!

Seeing that someone had made an attack against it, the Lava Beast flew into a rage. Roaring loudly, his bulky tail lashed out.

Hualala!

Magma splashed about the field with great force.

Before Gu Mu could reach the Lava Beast, he felt an overwhelming heat gushing straight at him. Gu Mu hurriedly twisted his wrist to turn the stab into a parry.

Ding!

The tail struck his sword, and the aerial Gu Mu was sent flying instantaneously as if he were a cannonball.

Sou!

After determining precisely the other party's landing spot, Liao Xun swiftly threw a tile over for Gu Mu to step on.

Even though the both of them didn't have any experience of working together, as a Zongshi realm pinnacle expert, Liao Xun wouldn't commit a mistake in the simple job of throwing tiles.

"Senior granduncle, what do I do next?"

Not expecting the creature to be so formidable, as to be able to send him flying with a single strike of its tail, Gu Mu questioned in a panic.

"Give me a moment, I haven't thought of it yet. You should continue for now...." Zhang Xuan waved his hands.

"You haven't thought of what to do? Continue....?"

Gu Mu nearly failed to land on the tile and almost fell into the lava.

This senior granduncle is too unreliable!

It was just a moment ago that you claimed that you will guide me to tame the savage beast, that I should first engage it. The battle has already started, yet you have not come up with an idea....

Do you need to be so darned?

Hu!

Just as Gu Mu was feeling dismal, the provoked Lava Beast charged up to him, and its sharp dagger-like teeth abruptly closed in on him.

The attack came too swiftly, and Gu Mu didn't have any time to evade. Thus, he could

only face it head on with his sword.

Peng!

The sword came into contact with the Lava Beast's sharp teeth. Feeling a numbness in his hands, Gu Mu was sent flying once again.

Lava flowed beneath Gu Mu. Even though he was able to move around using those granite tiles, without the solid earth for his feet to apply his force on, the strength he could exert dipped significantly. At present, he was only capable of displaying sixty to seventy percent of his full strength,

It was impossible to face the frenzied attacks of the Lava Beast in his weakened state.

"Senior granduncle, are you ready yet?"

It took much effort before he managed to stabilize himself once more. He glanced at Zhang Xuan immediately to rush him, but what he saw was the other party standing on the spot with a blank expression, as though he was.... daydreaming.

A chill surged into his heart, and at this, Gu Mu really cried.

If only he knew this senior granduncle of his was that unreliable, he would have never come down.

Now that this fellow was fixated on him, it was impossible for him to escape even if he wanted to. Will he really meet his end here?

"Forget it, I'll go all out!"

Knowing that it was impossible for him to escape, he gritted his teeth and lifted his sword high up. Zhenqi flurried through his body as though a storm, and he sent the sword right down on the Lava Beast.

Peng!

When the two came into contact, Gu Mu was sent flying ten meters backward once more.

It was fortunate that Liao Xun was able to determine his landing points accurately

each time with precise timing. Otherwise, he would have long fallen into the lava and be reduced to ashes.

Ding ding ding!

After crossing a few more blows with the Lava Beast, Gu Mu was already on the verge of collapsing. At this moment, a voice sounded by his ear.

"Alright, listen to my instructions!"

Turning around, he saw his 'senior granduncle' looking at him with a calm expression.

Chapter 285

Master Teacher Pavilion, Here I Come!

Roar!

In the split moment when Gu Mu's attention was diverted by Zhang Xuan, the Lava Beast charged forward once more, generating frightening torrid air currents that threatened to rip him apart.

Taking a deep breath, Gu Mu prepared to face it once more with the sword in his hands. However, at this moment, his senior granduncle's voice sounded once again.

"Don't fend off its attack, keep your sword back into your storage ring!"

"Don't fend off its attack?"

Upon hearing those words, Gu Mu glanced at the agitated Lava Beast which was charging toward him and he nearly keeled over.

If he doesn't fend against such a violent attack, won't he be killed instantly?

"Hurry up!" In the midst of his hesitation, the voice urged him.

"Alright!"

Even though he was doubtful, he didn't think that his senior granduncle would go through so much trouble to kill him. Thus, he kept his sword back into his storage ring, and at this moment, became completely defenseless.

"Stretch your head toward him!"

Right after he kept his sword, the next instruction reached his ears.

Gu Mu staggered, and he nearly fell off the granite tile into the lava.

I can still accept it, albeit reluctantly, when you tell me to keep my sword and not fend

off its attack, but why in the world do I have to stretch my head forward?

Senior granduncle, are you in such a hurry to see me die?

Looking at how furious the Lava Beast is charging at me, wouldn't it bite my head off immediately if I were to stretch it over?

This isn't beast taming at all, this is a tribute....

"Don't waste any time, hurry up!"

The voice by his ear urged him.

The duo was conversing through zhenqi telepathy. Even though they had exchanged quite a few words, only two breaths had passed. At this moment, the ferocious Lava Beast was just three meters away from Gu Mu, and it could bite down on him at any moment now. It was already too late to try anything else.

"Forget it, I'll just give it a try!"

Reminding himself of the fact that his senior granduncle could have easily killed him when he was unconscious, he told himself that there was no need for him to use this gigantic fellow to murder him. Gritting his teeth, he stuck out his head, pointing it right into the other party's gaping mouth.

"This...."

As the duo spoke using telepathy, Liao Xun was completely oblivious to their exchange. Upon seeing the envoy trying to send his head into the mouth of the Lava Beast, he was horrified. His entire body trembled violently, and he was about to pass out.

Others would prepare delicacies and treasures to attract a savage beast's attention in order to tame it. It was his first time seeing someone offer his own head....

Even those who surpassed Zhizun realm would have their brain matter spurt out upon the bite of the Lava Beast!

If the envoy were to be killed here, he wouldn't have to dream about holding on to his position as the new Hall Master. He would be summoned by the headquarter immediately and be questioned for a month or two before being sentenced to death

by poison.

He quickly turned to look at the 'senior granduncle', but the other party was watching the situation impassively. There wasn't the slightest bit of anxiety in his eyes.

"Senior granduncle...."

Liao Xun couldn't help but yell for the other party to do something. However, before he could say anything else, he saw the other party point forward with his finger.

Hurriedly turning his head over, he witnessed a sight that left his eyes widened.

Gu Mu's head was already within the Lava Beast's mouth and if the latter closed its mouth, he would be killed on the spot. However, at this crucial moment.... Not only did the Lava Beast not bite down, it even turned around to flee.

Isn't it intent on tearing Gu Mu into pieces a moment ago? Why would it back away when the other party has delivered his head to it?

What.... is this situation?

He wasn't the only one who was bewildered by what was happening. Gu Mu was also confounded.

He had already prepared himself for his death and he hadn't expected such a situation to occur.

"Don't blank out. Quickly, rush forward and grab its tail!"

Gu Mu was still trying to make sense out of the situation when his senior granduncle's voice echoed once more.

At this point, he was already holding complete confidence in the other party's words. Thus, he stepped against the granite tile immediately and flew forward as if he were a swallow. In the blink of an eye, he had caught up with the other party.

Closing his arms, he embraced the creature's bulky tail tightly.

Roar!

Having his tail grabbed, the Lava Beast panicked. It began to thrash about immediately with all its might, and lava splashed into the surroundings, burning hole after hole in Gu Mu's clothes.

"What do I do next?"

Sensing that his zhenqi was reaching its limits from fending against the lava's heat, Gu Mu asked anxiously.

"Hold its tail tightly, no matter what it does!"

Zhang Xuan replied.

"Alright!"

With vicious tenacity, Gu Mu held onto the Lava Beast's tail with his four limbs. No matter how the other party struggled, he refused to let go. At this moment, he had no choice but to furiously pump even more zhenqi to fend off the intense heat in the surroundings.

Roar! Roar!

With its tail grabbed, Lava Beast was infuriated and it howled ceaselessly in anger, trying its best to shake Gu Mu off. However, its movements gradually slowed, and in less than a single minute, it went limp, its condition resembling a dead snake.

"This...."

Seeing the Lava Beast collapse, Gu Mu heaved a sigh of relief. He thought that he was going to die, and the current situation was unbelievable to him.

He had felt the ferocity from the Lava Beast when he faced it just a moment ago, that if it could, it would surely have torn him into pieces. But.... when he stretched his head toward the other party, why did it refuse to bite down and, instead, back off? Also, why did grabbing its tail result in this situation?

"Alright, bring it up to shore!"

Gu Mu was still wondering when he heard his senior granduncle's instruction in his ears.

"Yes!"

Grabbing onto the tail end of the paralyzed Lava Beast, he exercised his zhenqi and dragged it to shore.

In no time, the human and the beast were on the concrete granite ground.

Zhang Xuan walked up to the Lava Beast the moment it was on shore. With a flick of his wrist, a few silver needles appeared in his hands and he threw them straight at the Lava Beast.

"Tell it to submit to you. If it agrees, I'll help it achieve a breakthrough in its cultivation. Otherwise, die!"

After which, Zhang Xuan sat quietly by the side.

"Alright!"

Gu Mu walked up to the Lava Beast and relayed Zhang Xuan's words. A moment later, its massive head nuzzled against him, displaying its submission.

The contract was established swiftly and Gu Mu had successfully tamed the Lava Beast.

Liao Xun was completely dumbfounded, observing everything from beside

He had seen people tame beasts, but he had never seen anyone doing it so speedily!

That is a Zhizun realm pinnacle savage beast! For it to submit to a human so easily, isn't this.... too simple?

If taming a beast is that easy, doesn't that mean that I can be a beast tamer as well?

He wasn't the only one who thought so. Gu Mu also felt as if he was in a dream.

If not for the massive Lava Beast nuzzling against him continuously, he would truly doubt if everything was an illusion.

"Senior granduncle...."

Knowing that the one who pulled this miracle off was the senior granduncle, the duo turned to look at him immediately.

"This Lava Beast lives in the lava, and it doesn't have any peer or companion. It has never come into contact with any other life forms, and as such, it has a skeptical personality, having a fear of coming into contact with unfamiliar things!"

Knowing the question that was lingering in their minds, Zhang Xuan explained.

Even a person would become autistic after living in seclusion for too long, needless to say, a savage beast.

A Zhizun realm pinnacle savage beast possesses an intelligence that is in no way inferior to humans. Living in the depths of the volcano, it had not once met another lifeform. As such, it was filled with curiosity and fear for Gu Mu.

"When you utilized brute force and tried to kill it, it had retaliated instinctively. Even though this Lava Beast didn't have any battle experience, it held the advantage of being on its home ground, and it would have been impossible for you to emerge triumphantly!" Zhang Xuan continued.

Gu Mu nodded.

In that battle just now, he could barely fend off the other party's attacks. He clearly wasn't a match for the latter.

If it had continued that way, he would surely have died.

"Even though keeping your sword and sending your head to it was a clear act of suicide, the skeptical Lava Beast was doubtful toward your actions, and it felt fear! That's because.... the move was irrational!"

Zhang Xuan smiled, "On top of that, the Lava Beast has a huge weakness on its mouth. Upon seeing your irrational movement, it began to suspect if you had noticed that weakness and that you were baiting it. Thus, it chose to escape instead."

"So that's the case!"

Upon hearing the explanation, Gu Mu and Liao Xun came to a realization.

Gu Mu felt relieved that he had listened to his senior granduncle earlier on. Otherwise, if he were to continue fighting against the Lava Beast, he would have become a cripple by now.

"Then.... Why did grabbing its tail cause it to fall limp and lose its ability to fight?"

"Do savage beasts need to breathe?" Zhang Xuan looked at him.

"Of course they need to breathe...." Surprised by the question, Gu Mu was stunned for a moment before he hurriedly nodded his head.

Just like humans, savage beasts require air to survive.

"The Lava Beast had been living in the lava, but when we first arrived, we didn't see it. Don't you find it strange?"

Gu Mu was taken aback by Zhang Xuan's words.

The reason why fishes can breathe in water is that it has gills that can filter out water and absorb the oxygen contained within it. Lava is in fact just molten granite and it is impossible for there to be oxygen within the thick lava. When the three of them first arrived, they did not observe the Lava Beast's head. It was only after Liao Xun threw a stone at the lotus that it jumped out.

Can it be that.... this fellow doesn't need to breathe?

But that is impossible!

It is not heard of that a savage beast can survive without breathing!

"The breathing organ for Lava Beast, which is to mean the nose that we speak of, isn't on its head. Rather, it's on its.... tail!" Zhang Xuan explained.

"On its tail?"

The duo hurriedly turned to the Lava Beast, and they saw two rows of fine opening on its tail.

"Usually, this fellow would hide in the lava, exposing only its tail to breathe. Furthermore, its tail is the same color as the lava, and that's the reason why we failed

to notice it when we first arrived!"

Zhang Xuan smiled, "The reason why I had you hug the other party's tail is to obstruct its breathing. While a cultivator would still be able to sustain himself through his zhenqi, the same can't be said about savage beasts! Not to mention, it was thrashing around the scorching lava, causing its stamina to fall rapidly! Naturally, it would lose its ability to fight! I didn't notice these special characteristics from the start as well and I only managed to deduce them during your battle."

"I see!"

Gu Mu finally comprehended the situation the reason why his senior granduncle didn't say anything at the start. The other party wasn't toying with him, he was observing the characteristics of the Lava Beast to formulate a plan to subdue and tame it.

It was laughable that he mistook his intentions.... It was truly embarrassing!

Upon knowing all these facts, Gu Mu's reverence for his senior granduncle reached a new peak.

He was able to deduce the characteristics and personality of this Lava Beast within such a short period of time while observing their battle and formulate a method to tame it. Even a 4-star beast tamer would be incapable of accomplishing the same feat!

On top of that, the needles which he shot out at the Lava Beast probably curbed the other party's movements. Otherwise, it was impossible for the taming process to proceed so smoothly.

"Now that the Lava Beast has been tamed, you can now harvest the lotus seed!" Done with his explanation, Zhang Xuan waved casually.

"Alright!"

Gu Mu nodded, and without a word ado, he leaped into the lava once more, flitting swiftly toward the Crimson Flame Lotus.

Actually, upon seeing Gu Mu successfully tame the Lava Beast, Zhang Xuan had heaved a sigh of relief as well.

Just like humans, the Library of Heaven's Path will compile a book on a savage beast when it is engaged in a fight. The reason why he had Gu Mu face off with it was to compile a book to view its flaws.

Once he knew its flaws, the rest became simple.

Without the obstruction of the Lava Beast, Gu Mu brought a lotus pod back in no time. There were nine gold lotus seeds within and it emanated a fragrance which rejuvenated one's spirit.

"Senior granduncle, this is the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed...."

Placing the lotus seed carefully in a jade box, Gu Mu passed it forward.

"Un!" Grabbing over the box, Zhang Xuan took out two of the seeds and passed it over to Gu Mu. "One is for you, while the other one is for this Lava Beast!"

They had agreed beforehand that Gu Mu would take one Crimson Flame Lotus Seed, while the rest would belong to Zhang Xuan.

Due to the presence of this Lava Beast which was already at Zhizun pinnacle, Zhang Xuan decided to give him another seed.

After all, if not for this envoy telling him about it, Zhang Xuan wouldn't have known that there was such a treasure hidden in this Poison Hall branch and he would have missed it.

"Thank you, senior granduncle!"

Gu Mu was moved with great agitation.

"Here, I will leave this one at this branch. Whoever who reaches Zhizun realm pinnacle first will gain the right to consume it!"

Zhang Xuan took out another seed and passed it to Liao Xun.

The latter was also extremely grateful to Zhang Xuan.

Even though the Crimson Flame Lotus Seed was a precious commodity, it wasn't of much use to Zhang Xuan.

As long as he was able to find sufficient secret manuals, breaking through Zhizun realm pinnacle wasn't a problem at all. As such, the bottleneck in cultivation which others faced was non-existent for him.

Since it wasn't much use to him, and that he had obtained it from the Red Lotus Range Poison Hall branch, he didn't think that it was right for him to deprive the branch of all seeds.

After giving three of the lotus seeds out, Zhang Xuan kept the remaining six in his storage ring.

"Since I'm done with the matters here, it's time for me to leave!"

Zhang Xuan had accomplished his primary aim of browsing through the books in the Poison Hall, and he obtained the Crimson Flame Lotus Seeds on top of that. After conducting the last treatment for Gu Mu, he bided the others farewell.

"Senior granduncle.... Where can I find you if I wish to greet you in the future?"

Even though he knew that the other party would leave after harvesting the Crimson Flame Lotus Seeds, Gu Mu nevertheless felt a reluctance to part with him.

Even though he had merely known the other party for a few days, the latter had treated his trauma and helped him tame a Zhizun realm pinnacle savage beast. The favor that he had showered upon him was so great that it would be hard for him to repay.

Even though he had roughly guessed that the other party might not be his senior granduncle as he claimed to be, it didn't hinder his respect for him in any way.

"The world is my home. If we're fated, we'll eventually meet!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He was assuming a pseudo identity, and it was best for them not to meet ever again.

"Senior granduncle, this is my identity token. I know that it is useless to senior granduncle, but if you have any kin or students who are in trouble, you can get them to take this to Xuanyuan Kingdom's Poison Hall to look for me. As long as it is within my means, I'll do my best to help!"

With a flick of his wrist, he retrieved a jade token and then passed it to Zhang Xuan.

"Alright then, thank you!"

Knowing that the other party was doing this to repay the gratitude, Zhang Xuan didn't turn him down. He took the token and kept it in his storage ring.

"Farewell!"

After saying all that had to be said, Zhang Xuan walked out of the Poison Hall with large strides.

He remembered the roads he took on the way here with the Great Herb King, so even without anyone to lead him, he was able to leave easily.

Five days later, he finally stepped out from the perimeters of the Red Lotus Range.

He yelled with a deep tone, and after a moment, the Steelfang Howling Firmament Beast appeared in the air above him.

Leaping onto the back of the Howling Firmament Beast, the latter unfurled its wings, and the duo headed straight toward Tianwu Royal City.

Master Teacher Pavilion, here I come!

Chapter 286

Tianwu Royal City

The vast lands of Tianwu Kingdom span tens of thousands of kilometers.

Due to the backing of 2-star master teachers, it is classified as a Tier 1 Kingdom.

Tianxuan, Beiwu, Hanwu, Beichen, Qianyuan, Anyuan, Baili.... With Tianwu located right at the center of twelve other neighboring kingdoms, Tianwu Kingdom became the cultivation and trading hub in the area, a sacred land where countless people yearned to traveled to.

Princess Mo Yu had long left on her Viridescent Eagle, and thus, Zhang Xuan was the only person on the Howling Firmament Beast's back. Out of boredom, Zhang Xuan worked on increasing his knowledge in the Library of Heaven's Path and, at the same time, reinforced his cultivation and evaluated his current condition.

"Along with the rise of my cultivation, the effect of the Heaven's Path Golden Body is becoming increasingly insignificant...."

When Zhang Xuan was at Tongxuan realm, the Heaven's Path Golden Body had allowed him to easily subdue cultivators of the same realm. Upon reaching Half-Zongshi, the effects had become less apparent. Eventually, when he reaches Zongshi realm, its potency would be reduced further.

To the point that it becomes insignificant.

It appeared there was a need for him to look for additional physical body cultivation techniques for further upgrade and training.

As for Heaven's Path Fist Art, Heaven's Path Leg Art, Heaven's Path Movement Art.... Even though they were simple moves, they wielded incredible strength. From the looks of it, before he reached Zhizun, it was unlikely for him to be outdone in terms of battle technique. Thus, there was no hurry for him to look for new books.

"I'll have to take the master teacher examination as soon as possible after reaching

Tianwu Kingdom. Only after becoming a master teacher will I gain the rights to enter the Master Teacher Pavilion and browse through records on Kong shi...."

On the way here, he had written what Gu Mu told him about Kong shi on a blank piece of paper and confirmed the matter using the Library of Heaven's Path. It was true that Celestial Kong shi was afflicted with the Innate Fetal Poison just like him and that he was later cured of the poison.

That was to say, the Innate Fetal Poison wasn't without a cure. It was just that at his current standard, he was unable to identify the correct method to cure it.

After coming to this conclusion, Zhang Xuan felt reassured. However, at the same time, doubts emerged in his mind. His previous self was only an orphan, so why would an 8-star or 9-star poison master go so far as to poison him himself?

Could it be possible that he possessed an incredible background and came from a powerful family?

Even though Zhang Xuan was perplexed, he decided not to think too much about the matter. Putting aside the fact that his previous self was an abandoned orphan, he, as a transcender, felt uncomfortable at the thought of abruptly stumbling upon people claiming to be his parents or one of his kins.

Rather than to feel distressed, it was much wiser to just ignore it altogether.

In any case, with the Library of Heaven's Path in his grasp, Zhang Xuan could only grow stronger. The world is vast, and there was nowhere that he couldn't go!

After traveling for another two days, when the sun was about to set in the west, a towering city appeared before Zhang Xuan's eyes. Under the orange glow of the evening sun, the city appeared just like a vast mountain range which extended into the horizon.

The city was more than several dozen times larger than Tianxuan Royal City. Its infrastructures were beautiful and elegant and the ancient city walls which stood dozens of meters tall were comparable to relics of history and were altogether an imposing sight.

Staring down from above, the streets in the city were well-connected and filled with crowds walking to and fro. All kinds of carriages and horses were traveling in and out

of the city, creating an image of a lively painting.

As the trading hub of thirteen kingdoms, Tianwu Royal City was extraordinarily grand. It simply wasn't something that any of the cities Zhang Xuan had seen could compare to.

"Let's go down!"

Knowing that a city of such scale would surely have restrictions on massive savage beasts such as the Howling Firmament Beast, Zhang Xuan decided not to cause a ruckus. Thus, he landed at a location in the mountains not too far from the city, where the Howling Firmament Beast could behave freely, before walking toward the grand city with big strides.

"Please wait a moment! You've to pay the entrance fee to enter the city!"

He was about to walk through the gates when a group of guards stopped him.

"Entrance fee?"

Only upon looking around him did he realize that all visitors had to pay a certain sum to enter the city. If there wasn't such a restriction, the Tianwu Royal City's population would surely suffer from an uncontrollable population growth, possibly to the point that even the Tianwu royal family would be unable to manage the situation.

"That's right! Unless you're a master teacher or apprentice, you'll have to pay the toll fee!"

The guard said.

Master teachers were the foundation to the progress of the world, and thus, they possessed a high status in society. No matter where they went, they would be granted special privileges. This was something that the other occupations can never enjoy.

"Enough, what's the use of wasting your breath on him? Given his age, how could he be a master teacher or a master teacher apprentice?"

"That's right. Hurry up, there is a huge crowd waiting behind you!"

Seeing that the fellow was wasting their times, the two guards became impatient. The

crowd behind which was waiting to enter the city was also urging them to hurry up.

What are you putting an act for?

Since its establishment several thousand years ago, a toll had been imposed on all entries into the city. For you to not even know such a basic fact, which backward place did you come from?

"How much does it cost?"

Ignoring their irritated gazes, Zhang Xuan asked.

"100 gold coins!" A guard replied.

"100?" Zhang Xuan was astonished.

Even a star teacher in Hongtian Academy earn only two thousand gold coins per month. Hundred gold coins for an entrance fee was indeed exorbitant.

"That's right!"

Seeing the shocked expression on the other party's face, it was clear that he was someone who had never seen the world. The guards stared at him contemptuously.

To make such a huge fuss over a hundred gold coins, it is clear that he is a poor bloke.

"I don't have money...."

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Upon hearing those words, the guards revealed an expression that screamed 'I knew that you would say that' and bellowed, "If you don't have money, don't waste our time here! For you to think that you can enter the city like that, you must be dreaming...."

However, before he could finish his words, the irksome fellow before him lifted up a token in his hand and looked at him with an excited expression, "But with this, I shouldn't have to pay any money, right...."

"No matter what you have, it doesn't make a difference.... Ah? A master teacher apprentice identity token...."

Halfway through his words, the guard recognized the token in the other party's hands. His entire body trembled in shock, and all of the words that he was about to speak choked in his mouth. At this point, he was already on the verge of tears.

"Are you.... a master teacher apprentice?"

Those guards who were criticizing him just a moment ago turned pale upon seeing the token.

They had thought that he was a countryside bumpkin, but to think that he would be a formidable figure.

Brother, if you're a master teacher apprentice, you could have just entered straight away. Why do you have to go through all the trouble to ask us about the toll fee? Aren't you intentionally making things difficult for us....

"Please enter...."

Suppressing the stifling sensation in their chests, the guards stepped aside immediately to open up a path for him....

If the royal family were to find out that they had troubled a master teacher apprentice, their heads might be lopped off their necks.

Upon seeing that the token Liu shi and the others could allow him to enter freely, Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction. "To think that this toy would be this useful, saving me a hundred gold coins so easily...."

"...." The guards.

They had seen misers, but they had never seen such a scrooge.

For a master teacher apprentice, a figure who induces respect no matter where he goes, to be so happy just because he saved a hundred gold coins....

Behaving like that, aren't you doing injustice to your prestigious identity?

Ignoring the stifled guards, Zhang Xuan walked right into the city.

Even though he had several ten million gold coins in his storage ring, he nevertheless

maintained the mindset of a spendthrift. After all, gold coin saved is a gold coin earned. As for the opinions of others....

What does it have to do with me!

....

The streets within the city were wide, shops could be seen all around and vendors shouted passionately to gather customers. The remaining sunlight from the setting sun reflected off the towering buildings, inducing in oneself a warm feeling.

"As expected of Tianwu Royal City, an object picked at random from any vendor is of much higher grade than those in Tianxuan Kingdom!"

Walking along the street, Zhang Xuan glanced at the various products sold in the stores and he could not help but feel astonished.

Him right now was like Granny Liu stepping into the Prospect Gardens, curious about everything around him.

Even though he had read about most of the objects present here in the books, it was a different thing to see them in person.

"So you're a master teacher apprentice as well?"

Zhang Xuan was looking around his surroundings when a voice sounded behind him. Turning around, he saw a lady in her twenties looking at him with a perplexed expression.

This lady was dressed in a light green robe. Even though her appearance paled in comparison to amazing beauties like Shen Bi Ru and the others, she had an amiable face which felt pleasant to the sight.

An elder dressed in an obvious bodyguard outfit stood beside her, and the aura he exuded felt deep. From time to time, a spark of light would flash across his eyes.

He was a Zongshi realm expert!

To be able to hire a Zongshi realm expert as her bodyguard, this lady was likely to be of an extraordinary standing.

"Un!"

Zhang Xuan replied casually. It was likely that these two saw his apprentice token when he entered the city, so they gave chase to ask him about it.

"Me too!"

With a laughter, the lady flipped her hand and a token appeared in her palm.

To think that she would be a master teacher apprentice as well.

"Incredible!" Zhang Xuan was impressed.

In Tianxuan Kingdom, even someone as outstanding as Lu Xun was unable to become a master teacher apprentice, but a random lady he met on the streets turned out to be one. The disparity between both kingdoms was indeed huge.

The lady was clearly satisfied with Zhang Xuan's response, and her attitude toward him improved significantly. "My teacher is 1-star Master Teacher Cheng Xuan. May I know who you're studying under?"

"My teacher isn't well-known, and I doubt you would have heard of him!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He didn't actually have a teacher, and this token was given to him by Liu Shi and the others. As such, he could only beat around the bush.

Seeing that the other party was unwilling to disclose anything, the lady also didn't pursue this any further. Instead, she looked at him with a doubtful expression and asked, "For you to arrive at the capital at such a time.... can you be here for the [Question Symposium] as well?"

"Question Symposium?" Zhang Xuan was bewildered. "What's that?"

"You don't know?" The lady stared at Zhang Xuan as though he was a monster. "The Question Symposium is the final test for the master teacher examination. Only those who have passed the Question Symposium can become a true master teacher. Since you're a master teacher apprentice, how can you not even know about it?"

Zhang Xuan was confused.

He only obtained the apprentice token by impersonating as 'Yang shi's' disciple, so there wasn't anyone to explain to him the process of the master teacher examination. Previously, Liu shi and the others had only spoken briefly about the eligibility for the examination, and they hadn't touched on anything else in detail. Thus, he didn't know about the Question Symposium.

"That's right!" The lady hesitated for a moment, and a thought seemed to have flashed into her head. Coming to an epiphany, she said, "I get it, you must have just become an apprentice not too long ago! As a new apprentice, it is a long way before you can take the master teacher examination. Naturally, your teacher wouldn't have told you about the examination yet!"

Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

Putting aside how long it had been since he became a master teacher apprentice, it wasn't even two months since he arrived in this world. Besides, there wasn't even a single master teacher in Tianxuan Kingdom, and there wasn't a single book on master teachers. Thus, it would be a wonder if Zhang Xuan knew about the examination process.

"Since you've just become an apprentice, you need not be so anxious. Study hard, and as long as you pass the examination within ten years, you will bring glory to your ancestors!"

Hearing that the other party had just become an apprentice, the lady's attitude became even more amiable. "After all, we can't expect ourselves to be as talented as Princess Mo Yu and pass the master teacher examination at twenty-two!"

Upon speaking of Princess Mo Yu, her eyes began to glow in reverence.

Granny Liu stepping into the Prospect Gardens

Reference to the Dream of the Red Chamber. It is similar to Alice walking into Wonderland.

Chapter 287

Painter Guild

"Princess Mo Yu passed the master teacher examination?"

Zhang Xuan asked with doubt. Wasn't her still an apprentice when they were at Red Lotus City?

He had spent only twenty days in the Poison Hall. Could it be that the princess began the master teacher examination the moment she arrived in Tianwu Kingdom and had passed it?

"Princess Mo Yu is one of the most renowned geniuses in Tianwu Kingdom. She has just returned from her training half a month ago and, upon her return, passed the 2-star apothecary examination before taking on the master teacher examination. In a single breath, she overcame countless tests, and all that is left is the Question Symposium tomorrow. As long as she conquers the Question Symposium, she will become a true 1-star master teacher!"

The lady's eyes shone with excitement. "The only one who can outdo her feat of becoming a 1-star master teacher at twenty-two would be the number one genius in Tianwu Kingdom, Mo Hongyi!"

"Mo Hongyi?"

Despite being a 2-star apothecary, 1-star beast tamer, 1-star master teacher, and apprentice physician at twenty-two, she actually isn't the number one genius?

"You don't know about him?"

Seeing the confusion on the other party's face, the lady became speechless.

If she hadn't witnessed his apprentice token for herself, she would have thought that he was a fake.

It is one thing for you not to know about the various tests in the master teacher

examination and the [Question Symposium]....

But to not even know Mo Hongyi.... Which corner of the world did you pop out from?

"Is he famous?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Upon hearing those words, the lady suppressed the stifling sensation in her chest and asked, "It can't be that.... is this is your first time coming to Tianwu Royal City?"

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

"Fine!"

Seeing how the other party admitted to the matter so frankly without the slightest bit of embarrassment, the lady rolled her eyes.

Anyone else would surely be filled with embarrassment and a sense of inferiority upon being asked such a question, but this fellow answered it so boldly.

It is as though coming to Tianwu Kingdom for the first time is a glorious affair....

It is truly a wonder how he has such confidence.

"Since you don't know about him, let me tell you!"

The lady explained, "Mo Hongyi is reputed as the number one genius in Tianwu Kingdom in the past thousand years of history and his name is known throughout the surrounding thirteen countries. Despite being just twenty-six this year, he is already a 1-star pinnacle master teacher, 2-star apothecary, 2-star formation master, and 2-star blacksmith!"

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in shock.

1-star pinnacle master teacher, 2-star apothecary, 2-star formation master, and 2-star blacksmith....

Despite being just twenty-six, he was shouldering four great occupations of the Upper Nine Paths!

From the looks of it, he is on a totally different level from Lu Xun, who is also reputed

as a genius in Tianxuan Kingdom. In fact, even Mo Yu is far from his match.

Seeing the change in the other party's expression, the lady nodded her head in satisfaction before continuing on, "Not only so, this Great Genius Mo's talent in cultivation is also outstanding. Three years ago, he achieved Zongshi realm and defeated the Zongshi realm intermediate stage General Tie Shu. After which, with a single sword, he slaughtered the Five Northern Warriors who have been plaguing the northern regions! One must know all five of them were Zongshi realm experts, and three of them had even reached Zongshi realm intermediate stage! For him to kill all five of them single-handedly, I would not have dared to believe it if I had not heard it from a reliable source."

"At the start of this year, he reached Zongshi realm advanced stage. Just a while ago, at the Heaven Spring Peak, he battled the Zongshi realm pinnacle Master Hong Ruo, defeating him within a hundred blows. Furthermore, in the midst of the battle, he successfully achieved a breakthrough in his cultivation, reaching Zongshi realm pinnacle. Even the emperor had complimented him as a genius who appears only once in a thousand years, and that his future accomplishments would be limitless!"

"Zongshi realm pinnacle at twenty-six? Furthermore, he is capable of battling those with cultivation above his?" Zhang Xuan was astounded.

It was no wonder why he could be reputed as the number one genius in the past thousand years. This Mo Hongyi was indeed a fearsome figure.

In comparison to him, all of the so-called 'geniuses' he had seen were as though fireflies before the sun, too insignificant to mention.

"Since this Mo Hongyi's surname is Mo, does it mean that he is part of the Tianwu royal family as well?"

Suddenly, Zhang Xuan noticed a peculiarity and asked.

Princess Mo Yu's surname is Mo, so this means that the royal family of Tianwu Kingdom goes by this surname. Can this Mo Hongyi be a member of royalty as well?

"That's right!" The lady nodded her head. "He is a son of one of the princes but he isn't favored by the emperor. Although he is Princess Mo Yu's elder brother in terms of seniority, his standing pales far in comparison to hers. Even so, given his talent, no one dares to underestimate him!"

"Un!" Zhang Xuan agreed.

In this world, even though one's birth determines his nobility, as long as one is willing to work hard, he can nevertheless earn respect.

Mo Hongyi was an example. Even though he wasn't in line for the throne, given his current prestige, if he truly wanted the crown, the other princes were not likely to be a match for him.

When one's capabilities exceed a certain level, schemes and ploys become laughable deeds that are comparable to playing house.

Seeing the other party enter into contemplation, the lady continued, "However, even though he's an incredible figure, I revere Princess Mo Yu more. Not only is she beautiful, she's talented as well. I want to be like her, polite, humble and possesses an earnest desire for knowledge. Just like her, I'll work hard and make a name for myself with my own capabilities!"

"Polite, humble, and possessing an earnest desire for knowledge?"

Zhang Xuan had been with this Princess Mo Yu for many days, but why hadn't he notice these strengths of hers?

Shaking his head, he chose not to dwell on this question. Recalling all that the other party had said before, he asked, "The Question Symposium that you spoke of.... Other than Princess Mo Yu, how many other people are taking it?"

Upon hearing his question, the lady rolled her eyes once more.

"Do you think master teachers are like cabbages in the market, available whenever you want it? There might not even be a single person who successfully passes every test in the master teacher examination in the whole of a year! I've specially traveled here from Quanghai City just to spectate the princess's master teacher inauguration ceremony, so how can there be anyone else?"

"Quanghai City?" A book appeared in Zhang Xuan's mind, and within it was a map of Tianwu Kingdom.

For example, if Tianwu Royal City were Tianxuan Royal City, Quanghai City would be similar to Baiyu City, the second largest city in Tianwu Kingdom. Given that this

talkative and extroverted lady was escorted by a Zongshi realm bodyguard, it was likely that her standing wasn't ordinary.

But that is to be expected as well. It is impossible for one to become a master teacher without sufficient connections to search for a good teacher to guide them.

After another short exchange, Zhang Xuan learned that her name was Ling Xiaoxiao and that she had just become a master teacher apprentice during the year.

The reason why she spoke so much to him was that they were fellow apprentices and that she thought that they should look out for one another.

"The Question Symposium will be carried out tomorrow afternoon at the Master Teacher Pavilion. If you wish to take the master teacher examination, you should take a look. I'll be leaving now, farewell!"

After speaking for a short while longer, Ling Xiaoxiao realized that this apprentice known as Zhang Xuan seemed to be completely ignorant of the master teacher examination. As such, she lost her interest to chat with him.

In her opinion, it would be several decades before he would be eligible to take the master teacher examination, and they were of two completely different standards.

"I should first find a restaurant to dine in before looking for lodging!"

Bidding the lady farewell, Zhang Xuan stretched his back lazily.

He had already obtained a clear idea of the Master Teacher Pavilion's location and it was getting late. Furthermore, after seven consecutive days of consuming dry rations on the back of the Howling Firmament Beast, Zhang Xuan had gotten sick of that food.

After eating his dinner, just as Zhang Xuan was about to look for an inn to settle in, he saw a massive building before him. On the plaque hung above its entrance were two majestic words which felt vigorous and soulful, as if it would soar out from the board at any time.

"Painter Guild?"

Recognizing the words on it, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

The Painter, just like Apothecary, is an occupation of the Nine Paths and there is a guild to oversee its affairs. However, Tianxuan Kingdom was too small and remote, so it didn't possess the qualifications to build a branch.

Zhang Xuan didn't expect to see the Painter Guild right after entering Tianwu Royal City.

"I should take a look!"

Of the numerous skills that Zhang Xuan possessed, after pill forging and beast taming, the one he was the most skilled at was painting, and he was capable of even producing a painting of the fifth level. Since he managed to chance on the guild, it was a good chance for him to take the examination to become an official painter.

After all, he had only acquired the emblems of a 2-star beast tamer and 1-star apothecary at the moment and this looked rather plain.

As for poison master, even though his mastery in poison had also reached the level of a 2-star, he was in disguise as the envoy's 'senior granduncle' then, so it was impossible for him to take the poison master examination. Naturally, he didn't manage to obtain the corresponding emblem.

But even if he were to have successfully acquired it, given how hostile the other occupations were toward poison masters, he wouldn't dare to take it out either.

As such thoughts flashed through his mind, Zhang Xuan stepped into the Painter Guild.

As expected of the Painter Guild. Its vast hall was arranged in an orderly and artistic manner, making one feel as though he has stepped into a painting.

Slowly walking inward, Zhang Xuan felt as if he were walking leisurely in the midst of a book, and an indescribable sensation of comfort embraced him.

Hung on the walls around him were all kinds of art pieces, and every single one of them was astonishingly lifelike, having reached the first level of paintings, Reality Depiction.

A painter has to grasp the first four realms of a painting, Reality Depiction, Spiritual Canvas, Infused Intentions, and Breathtaking Verisimilitude before he can be qualified as a 1-star. Even though a painting of the first level sounds unexceptional, several years

of effort is required before one can produce such a painting.

Without sufficient experience and comprehension, it is no simple task to depict a scenery realistically.

Those who are capable of drawing these paintings are at minimum apprentice painters.

"Gongzi, may I know what kind of painting you are looking for? I can bring you around!"

As Zhang Xuan slowly browsed through the paintings, a green-robed attendant suddenly walked up to him politely.

"Are these paintings for sale?"

Zhang Xuan pointed to those pieces hung on the wall.

"Indeed! Isn't gongzi here to buy a painting? The attendant nodded.

If the Painter Guild doesn't sell paintings, where else can one buy them?

"Oh...." After giving the matter some thought, Zhang Xuan felt embarrassed for asking this question. It was similar to how the Apothecary Guild sold pills. It was absurd to think that the Painter Guild doesn't sell paintings.

Nodding his head, Zhang Xuan asked, "These are all paintings of the first level. Are there any higher level paintings?"

"Please follow me upstairs! In the guild, the paintings on the first floor are mainly those of the first level, the paintings on the second floor are mainly those of the second level, and so on. Gongzi, what level of painting are you interested in buying? I'll bring you up right now!" The attendant's eyes lit up.

The higher the level of the painting, the more expensive it was. As an attendant, he received a commission based on the price of the painting sold. The more expensive the painting Zhang Xuan bought, the more money the attendant would earn.

"Is there...."

Just as he was about to ask if there was any painting of the fifth level for him to look through, he saw a crowd charge forward.

"Hurry up, Ji Mo gongzi is out!"

"He passed the 1-star painter examination?"

"Indeed! The examination has just ended and in order to thank the crowd for their support, he intends to conduct an open painting, and will auction the finished art piece on the spot!"

"Open painting? Great! I will get his painting for sure...."

....

People in the crowd started to discuss among themselves.

They were mostly young ladies and, walking slightly forward, Zhang Xuan could see a few middle-aged men. Judging by the clothes on them, they were likely to possess great wealth.

"Ji Mo gongzi, painting?"

Zhang Xuan looked at them contemptuously.

"Ji Mo is the young master of the capital's Ji Clan. Despite just being in his teens, he is already an official painter of the guild...." Upon speaking of Ji Mo gongzi, the attendant's face grew red in agitation as well. "Gongzi, if you intend to purchase a painting, you should take a look at the open painting too. If you can buy Young Master Ji's painting, you will have made your trip here worth it."

Chapter 288

Ji Mo gongzi

"Oh? Let's go over then!"

Since Zhang Xuan was free, he decided to take the opportunity to learn more about how the painter examination was conducted. Thus, he followed behind the green-robed attendant into the crowd.

Right at the front, before a dark green table lined against the wall, an eighteen or nineteen-year-old youngster, dressed in white, was sitting on a wooden chair, and his eyes were tightly closed.

"Ji Mo gongzi, I love you! I want to bear your babies!"

"How shameless can you get? Ji gongzi is mine! Whoever who dares to vie with me, I'll rip off her clothes!"

"Young mistress, a beautiful lady over there is intent on vying with you. Go and rip off her clothes, we'll cheer you on from here!"

"...."

Even though Ji Mo gongzi's eyes were still tightly shut, many ladies in the surroundings had already gone into a frenzy.

"Ji gongzi may be young, but he's extremely gentle toward ladies. More importantly, he has a suave appearance. Thus, he became the idol of ladies in the capital!" The green-robed attendant explained with a hushed voice.

Zhang Xuan nodded. Turning to look at Ji Mo gongzi, his skin was indeed fair and smooth, and he had a dashing face. Even though his eyes were closed, his lips were slightly curled upward and vaguely, it seemed as if he was smiling. Zhang Xuan could understand why he was able to win the fancy of these ladies.

Talented, capable, a good background and most importantly, he was dashing. It was

no wonder why so many ladies went insane for him.

"This is.... What is he doing?"

Seeing the other party seated with his eyes shut, ignoring the ruckus around him, Zhang Xuan inquired.

"Ji Mo gongzi is about to paint, he is probably calming his brain and adjusting his mental state!" The green-robed fellow said.

"Adjusting his state of mind? Here?" Zhang Xuan was puzzled.

It was just a painting. Zhang Xuan would usually grab a brush and start on his work right away.... Is there a need to adjust any state of mind?

Besides, even if he truly needs to adjust his state of mind, he should have gone somewhere quiet and peaceful. With so many people causing a huge ruckus here, how in the world does he expect to adjust his state of mind?

"Ji gongzi possesses incredible talents, having reached the level of a master painter before even reaching twenty. Every single action that he makes has its own profound purpose, this isn't something a countryside bumpkin like you can comprehend!"

Before the green-robed attendant could reply, a lady turned around and glared at Zhang Xuan furiously.

"Indeed, where did this amateur come from? Scram aside, don't taint Ji gongzi's painting!" Another lady harrumphed angrily.

Hualala!

The ladies in the surroundings turned to glare at Zhang Xuan with disdainful eyes.

"Ah?"

Not expecting to meet with so much hostility just by raising a simple doubt, Zhang Xuan became speechless.

"A lot of civilians in Tianwu Kingdom are interested in painting, thus raising the status of painters here greatly. Ji gongzi, as one of the most talented painters of the younger

generation, has countless fans. Thus, it is best for you not to say anything here. Otherwise, you might really drown from the criticisms of his die-hard fans!"

With a bitter smile, the green-robed attendant whispered to him

Zhang Xuan nodded. Just as he was about to speak, Ji gongzi abrupt opened his eyes and stood up.

"Look, Ji gongzi is about to begin painting!"

"I wonder what level of painting will he create!"

"Does it have to be said? Ji gongzi is an official painter, his works are definitely at least of the second level!"

....

Upon seeing Ji gongzi move, those who were glaring at Zhang Xuan previously turned to look forward immediately, their eyes twinkling with adoration.

The first four realms of painting are Reality Depiction, Spiritual Canvas, Infused Intentions, and Breathtaking Verisimilitude.

Just like in the case of Lu Chen and Yuanyu, official painters, otherwise known as master painters, are capable of producing a painting of the second level or third level with ease. As for whether the painting can reach Breathtaking Verisimilitude, it would depend on his luck and condition.

"Me, Ji Mo, will now display my humble skills!"

Ji Mo stood before the table and with a flick of his wrist, a Chinese fan appeared in his hand. Gently fanning himself twice, his black hair and white robe danced along with the light breeze. "The painting that I create will be sold on the spot. However, I will not claim a single cent of the money, and instead, I'll be using it to build a Painting Hall. I'll invite apprentice painters to conduct lessons there so as to propagate the comprehension and passion for painting!"

"As expected of Ji gongzi, he truly doesn't care for material wealth...."

"A character befitting of a master painter, I am impressed!"

....

Hearing his words, the crowd burst into commotion once more. Numerous ladies screamed fanatically.

"This fellow sure knows how to win the hearts!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

This Ji Mo gongzi might be young but he was obviously skilled in politics, knowing how to attract attention.

That was similar to the charity auctions conducted by celebrities in his previous life. In plain honesty, they were just gimmicks.

If he truly wanted to build a Painter Hall and propagate the passion and understanding of painting, he could have done so silently. There was no need for him to create such a huge ruckus. More importantly.... It was already late autumn, and not to mention, night time. It felt cold just to stand on the spot and yet he was fanning himself....

"Silence!"

Shutting his fan, Ji Mo gongzi gestured grandly, "Alright, not to waste everyone's time, I shall begin painting now. I hope that everyone can remain silent while I am at work!"

Hearing his words, the screaming crowd quietened down all of a sudden.

Smiling lightly, Ji Mo gongzi flung his sleeves and picked up a brush.

After opening a xuan paper on the table, Ji Mo struck the table lightly with his left hand, and under the tremor of his zhenqi, a droplet of ink leaped into the air from the ink slab and landed precisely on the tip of his brush. Then, with a grand movement of his right hand, the brush fell on the surface of the paper.

The brush flew around the paper gracefully, creating an imposing sight.

Hualala!

The brush danced about on the paper, reminiscent of a fish swimming freely in a pond. Accompanying the passing of time, and the painting gradually took shape.

It was a painting of a mountain and a stream.

On the tall and towering mountain was a combination of mystical forests and mysterious boulders, divided by a stream that flowed through them. Ding dang, one could almost hear the sound of the stream striking the surface of the boulder, and the leaves were dancing toward a certain direction, as though a gentle breeze was caressing them.

"This is a painting of the second level!"

With a single glance, Zhang Xuan nodded his head silently in approval.

The Heaven's Path Painting Art which Zhang Xuan compiled using the books in Master Lu Chen's house had given him a profound understanding of paintings. Even without the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan was capable of appraising paintings to a certain standard.

This mountain stream painting was detailed, allowing people to feel as if it were a true mountain right before them. There was a spiritual touch to the painting which gave it bizarre but wonderful aesthetics. This was proof that it has reached the level of Spiritual Canvas.

However, even though the contents were outstanding, the mountain and stream were lacking artistic conception and a personal touch. In other words, it did not reach the level of Infused Intentions.

"It is a pity. If he wasn't overly focused on showing off his skills, and instead, had carved out his painting slowly and calmly, he might have been able to achieve the level of Infused Intentions!" Zhang Xuan sighed after a moment

Even though this Ji Mo gongzi was a braggart, his painting fundamentals were in place. Logically speaking, as long as he were to paint calmly, producing a painting of the third level shouldn't be a problem.

However, his obsession with graceful and exaggerated movements had caused him to neglect the essence of the painting. Thus, this painting had only managed to reach Spiritual Canvas pinnacle, just a small step away from Infused Intentions.

Even though Zhang Xuan thought that it was a pity, he didn't voice out his thoughts.

He was only here to see how the master painter examination was conducted and he wasn't related to this Ji Mo gongzi in any way. Besides, he had been criticized by the

crowd just moments ago for expressing his doubts on Ji Mo's actions, and he didn't want to be berated by this bunch of women before him.

Soon, the painting was completed.

Ji Mo gongzi threw the brush into the brush holder and hung the painting on the wall.

"This is a painting that has reached the second level pinnacle, and it is called Breeze By the Mountain and Stream. The auction will start now. The starting price is one million gold coins, and every raise must be a hundred thousand gold coins at the minimum."

At which, the edges of Li Ji gongzi's lips shot up, and a mesmerizing smile appeared on his face. Waving the fan in his hands, he brought out the disposition of a dashing scholar. "I'll accompany anyone who manages to purchase this painting for dinner, for free!"

"Accompany for dinner? This painting is mine!"

"Don't compete with me, I'll offer one million and a hundred thousand!"

"You wish to buy Ji Mo gongzi's painting for one million and a hundred thousand? Stop joking! A million and three hundred thousand!"

"I offer two million!"

....

Upon hearing the additional service that came with the painting, the ladies' eyes reddened with excitement immediately. As they competed wildly against one another, the price soared rapidly.

"Two million and four hundred thousand?"

Seeing the price reach two million in the blink of an eye, Zhang Xuan was flabbergasted.

He sold the fifth level painting he created to Lu Chen, Huang Yu, and the others for merely two million each and this mediocre second level painting has exceeded that sum...."

This is way too damned!

"That.... How much is a painting of the fifth level, Spirit Creation, worth?"

Feeling dismayed, Zhang Xuan could not help but ask the attendant beside him.

"A painting of the fifth level? That would be a treasure left behind by a 2-star grandmaster painter! Furthermore, even such a painter wouldn't be able to produce a fifth level painting as when he pleases. It depends heavily on his condition and luck.... A painting of that level will easily become the treasure of our Painter Guild, and one can say that it is.... priceless!"

The green-robed attendant hesitated for a moment before answering.

"Priceless?" Zhang Xuan's body swayed violently.

"Indeed! If one has no choice but to assign it a price, this starting price would likely be at minimum ten million gold coins. As for how high it can rise, I can't give a concrete answer to that. However, half a year ago, an auction for a painting of the fifth level was conducted here, and the final price was thirty-four million gold coins."

The green-robed attendant replied.

Zhang Xuan's mouth twitched and he was on the verge of tears.

Thirty-four million for a single painting and he sold four of it at two million each.... Why is the world be so cruel to him?

"The Painter Guild has been established in the capital for less than thirty years, and it was only from then that the price of paintings had been on the rise. If it was thirty years ago, when no one held paintings in high regard, a painting of the fifth level would only be worth one or two million." The attendant said. "If it were any higher than that, no one would be willing to spend their money!"

"One or two million, thirty years ago?"

Zhang Xuan shook.

"That's right!" The attendant nodded.

After hearing the other party's verification, Zhang Xuan finally recovered, and his aching heart was soothed.

Tianxuan Kingdom was remote and there wasn't the presence of a Painter Guild. It seemed that what Huang Yu and the others reported to him was the thirty-year historical price, and two million.... could already be considered as a huge sum for a painting of the fifth level then.

"Does Gongzi want to buy a painting of the fifth level?" The green-robed attendant looked at him. "Only our guild leader is capable of drawing a painting of the fifth level, but he had gone out half a month ago in search of inspiration and isn't back yet...."

"I am just making a casual inquiry...."

Suppressing his vexation, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

"That...."

Staring at Zhang Xuan, the attendant asked, "Then, gongzi.... why don't you buy Ji Mo gongzi's Breeze by the Mountain and Stream? It is second level pinnacle and, not to mention, Ji gongzi's work. Its value will definitely rocket in the future!"

"Forget it!" Zhang Xuan shook his head. "I'm not here to buy paintings.... Besides, it's just a painting of the second level. I'm not interested in it!"

"Just a painting of the second level? How arrogant!"

Before the green-robed attendant could reply to Zhang Xuan's words, a cold harrumph sounded. Lifting his head, Zhang Xuan saw Ji Mo gongzi staring coldly at him.

"Hm?"

Zhang Xuan didn't expect the other party to hear his words when he had already spoken so softly. Zhang Xuan replied with embarrassment, "I apologize, I was just speaking casually, so please do not be offended by my words!"

Every painting is created painstakingly and saying such words before a painter is indeed inappropriate.

"Hmph, do you think this can be settled with just an apology?"

Ji Mo gongzi flung his sleeves, and his eyebrows shot up, "This action of interrupting the auction and treating my painting with contempt, you are insulting the occupation and belittling all official painters!"

"Then.... What do you think I should do?"

Zhang Xuan had only made a casual comment and had already apologized for his disrespect. Yet, the other party went on and claimed that he was insulting the occupation and him. Feeling helpless, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

"Simple, buy my painting at five million gold coins!"

Placing his hands behind his back, Ji Mo gongzi glanced at him impassively. "Don't worry, I won't take a single cent of that money. I'll donate all of it to build the Painter Hall so you can consider it as atonement for your mistake!"

"Five million gold coins?"

Zhang Xuan was stunned.

He had merely come to take a look, making a comment in passing, but the other party actually wanted to force a deal upon him. What a joke!

There are so many people who worship you present, can't you get them to buy it for you....

"Why? Are you unwilling to buy it?"

Ji Mo gongzi sneered coldly. Waving his hands casually, he said, "You can refuse, but you must apologize now and swear not to step into the guild ever again! Our Painter Guild doesn't welcome people like you!"

"Never step into the guild ever again?" Zhang Xuan was speechless.

Kindness doesn't beget kindness. Other people will simply take advantage of you.

It was just a casual comment and he had already made an apology, yet the other party refused to let the matter go.

"I can apologize, and never stepping into the Painter Guild is fine by me as well. In fact,

I can even buy your painting for five million gold coins. However... Your painting has to be worth that price first!"

Zhang Xuan shook his head, "Do you think that this toy, which any apprentice painter can create, is worthy of that price?"

Xuan paper -> a kind of high quality paper.

Chapter 289

Painting Through a Savage Beast [3in1]

After the uproar that Zhang Xuan created with the ladies, the crowd had cleared the area around him, causing him and the attendant to stand out with exceptional conspicuity.

While everyone was busy placing their bids, the two of them were chatting incessantly about something else, and upon witnessing this, Ji Mo gongzi felt displeased and disrespected. Then, when he listened carefully to their conversation, it turned out that they were belittling his work. How could he tolerate this? Thus, he bellowed at them immediately.

They were clearly challenging his prestige and authority.

He had thought that the other party would apologize immediately upon being questioned like that, but contrary to his expectations, the other party spoke such words in return.

A toy which any apprentice painter can create....

Becoming infuriated, his face turned crimson red immediately.

"What did you say?"

Clenching his fists tightly, a surge of power gushed out from him, causing the air in the surroundings to howl. He was actually a Pixue realm expert!

To be able to attain Pixue realm below twenty years of age, it seemed that this Ji Mi gongzi's talent in cultivation was no way inferior to his flair for painting.

The green-robed attendant didn't expect Zhang Xuan to say such words, and his face paled immediately.

Putting aside the fact that the Ji Clan was one of the Three Great Clans in the capital, this Ji gongzi himself was a highly respected 1-star painter with incredible rallying

abilities. Provoking him like that.... Wasn't that equivalent to courting death?

Angering the other party and receiving a beating were no big deals, but it was highly likely that Zhang Xuan would be banned from the Painter Guild. If so, he wouldn't be able to buy a single painting no matter how much money he offered.

"Gongzi, calm down. It's best that.... you apologize and give in...."

He tugged on the clothes of the young man beside him involuntarily and sent a telepathic message.

After which, the young man before him nodded and spoke, "Oh, it's my mistake to say that any apprentice painter can create such a painting!"

"That's more like it...."

Hearing Zhang Xuan admit his mistake, the attendant was just about to heave a sigh of relief when he heard the second half of his words. His eyes shot upward and he nearly passed out from shock.

".... This is an insult to apprentice painters! Given the standard of this painting, even a random savage beast is able to do better than that! Five million you say? I won't even buy it for five gold coins!" Zhang Xuan uttered.

He didn't wish to cause trouble, but that didn't mean that he would allow anyone to climb all over his head.

Trying to take advantage of me? You must be joking!

It's already good enough that I'm not trying to take advantage of you.

While the other party was drawing, without using the Library of Heaven's Path, he was able to see seven to eight flaws with just his own judgment. He wouldn't want this mediocre drawing even if the other party were to give it to him for free. To pay for it.... You must be pulling my leg!

Savage beast? Five gold coins?

Zhang Xuan spoke calmly and the crowd became tongue-tied, beginning to stare at him as if they were looking at a monster.

To insult a painter right at home in the Painter Guild, where did you get such confidence?

"You...."

Ji Mo gongzi was so angry that he nearly vomited blood.

Even a random savage beast would be able to do better than him.... Won't buy it even for five gold coins....

The other party was clearly doubting his professionalism!

"Alright, there's nothing much to see about this clown. Let's go up and take a look at the other paintings!" Disregarding the infuriated Ji Mo, Zhang Xuan turned around impassively and prepared to leave.

Even though he had just arrived at Tianwu Kingdom and didn't possess any standing in the capital, he was someone who was about to take the master teacher examination and should carry a befitting disposition.

If the other party were to dare to say such words to him after he becomes a master teacher, he would lash him to death on the spot instead of wasting any breath on him!

This is the authority and power unique to a master teacher.

Master teachers mustn't be sullied, and those who dare to desecrate one has to die!

He was just a boastful painter and yet he dared to force a sale upon him. Zhang Xuan was already behaving very respectfully to him, having merely criticized his piece.

"Hold it right there!"

Seeing how that fellow intended to leave straight after humiliating him, Ji Mo gongzi's face warped in anger and he almost flew into a rage.

However, even though he was infuriated, he didn't lose his rationality. Taking a deep breath, he suppressed his anger and stared at Zhang Xuan coldly.

"Since you spoke so confidently, you must be rather confident in your knowledge of painting. Then, do you dare to compete with me?"

"Compete?"

"That's right! We'll start painting simultaneously and after we're done, we'll find someone to appraise our work. The person whose painting is superior and attains the higher level wins! The losing side will have to kneel down and apologize, and swear to never enter the Painter Guild ever again...."

Ji Mo gongzi's eyes were filled savagery, "How about it, do you dare to take on the challenge?"

"Start painting simultaneously? Find someone to appraise our work? Are you certain?"

Seeing how confident the other party was, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He didn't mind competing with the other party. In any case, he had nothing else to do today apart from exploring the Painter Guild and, from the looks of it, the other party wouldn't let this matter slip if he were to reject his challenge.

"Why? Do you not dare to take me on?" Ji Mo gongzi sneered.

"That's not it, it's just that...." Placing his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan looked at him with a helpless expression, "I'm afraid that.... you'll cry!"

Gudong!

Everyone fell to the ground, the entire room falling into silence.

Huala!

Then, the entire room burst into an uproar.

"What in the world are you bragging about?"

"Ji Mo gongzi is an official painter! How dare a nobody like you spout such arrogant words!"

"Compete with him! Let him know the capability of a true master painter!"

....

The ladies present stared at Zhang Xuan furiously. With arms akimbo, each and every one of them felt a strong urge to tear Zhang Xuan into pieces.

We've seen arrogant people, but we've never seen such an arrogant person. You dare say that Ji Mo gongzi will cry?

Do you know who he is?

He is the first person in Tianwu Royal City to pass the painter examination before having reached twenty years of age, a person who possesses unparalleled talent in painting....

Afraid that he will cry?

Who do you think you are?

The guild leader of the Painter Guild?

"You...."

Ji Mo gongzi's body swayed, and blood nearly burst forth from his mouth.

The other party's words were way too vicious!

He knew that the more he quarreled with the other party, the more likely he would die from anger. Thus, he waved his hands and said, "Then let's not waste any time then, let our skills do the speaking!"

After which, as if he was afraid that the other party might back out, he turned around and issued instructions to an attendant behind him immediately.

The attendant then turned around and left, returning with two elders in no time.

"This is Vice Guild Leader Cheng and Vice Guild Leader Wu. They are 2-star grandmaster painters, so there shouldn't be a problem having them act as the judges, right?"

Hearing that the two were vice guild leaders, Zhang Xuan directed his attention to them immediately.

These two seemed to be around Master Lu Chen's age and snowy beards hung on their chins. Perhaps due to years of immersion in painting, both of them carried unique and refined dispositions.

"I'm fine with it!"

It made no difference to Zhang Xuan whoever the judge was. Thus, he nodded to indicate his approval.

"Do the two of you wish to compete?" Walking forward, Vice Guild Leader Cheng asked with a frown.

The attendant had explained to them about the conflict on their way here; a youngster of unknown background suddenly appeared and spoke arrogantly before Ji Mo, resulting in a conflict between them.... The two vice guild leaders were curious to see how that youngster could be so confident.

"Yes!" Ji Mo gongzi bowed.

"May I ask from whom did you learn painting?"

Vice Guild Leader Cheng turned to Zhang Xuan and asked.

"I am acquainted with master and grandmaster painters in the thirteen surrounding kingdoms, so I might just happen to know your teacher!"

"I merely possess an interest in painting, I do not have a teacher!" Zhang Xuan said.

His understanding of painting came from books, so it was true that he did not have a teacher.

"An interest? Do not have a teacher?"

Both Vice Guild Leader Cheng and Vice Guild Leader Wu exchanged gazes, and they felt baffled at the situation.

Even though painting ranked among the lowest in the Nine Upper Paths, it was impossible to learn true skills without guidance from a teacher.

The other party dares to compete with a 1-star painter just because he is somewhat

interested in painting?

Is he unaware of a master painter's capabilities, or did his arrogance blind his rationality?

"Painting is an elegant art and such a contest would be a breach of decorum. If the both of you have any arguments, it would be best to settle it privately. There's no need to settle it through a competition!"

After hesitating for a moment, Vice Guild Leader Wu tried to persuade the duo.

Painting is a refined activity, and using it for a competition is unbefitting of a refined painter.

"I beseech the two grandmasters to persuade us no further. Academics get to know each other through literature. On top of that, I believe that there's a need to uphold our pride as painters. This fellow dared to insult painting, if I do not have a showdown with him today, I will not be able to lying down!"

Before Zhang Xuan could speak, Ji Mo gongzi had already spoken up.

This fellow claimed that even apprentice painters and savage beasts could do better than him. If he didn't teach him a lesson today, his reputation would fall to the gutters, and he would be too embarrassed to meet anyone in the future.

"This...." Seeing that Ji Mo was adamant on the matter, the two vice guild leaders turned to Zhang Xuan, only to see him nod his head casually. "If he wishes to compete, so be it!"

"Alright then!"

Seeing that both parties had agreed to the competition and that it was impossible to persuade them otherwise, the two vice guild leaders could only agree to the matter. "Since the both of you have decided to compete with one another, we'll serve as judges then! The rules are simple; the time limit is two hours, and the person whose painting is at the higher level will be declared victorious! If both paintings are of the same level, the one who took the least time will be the winner."

There's nothing such as superior or inferior in art, and everyone has different tastes and interest. Thus, it is impossible to decide which artwork is 'superior' or 'inferior'.

However, since there were different levels to painting, they could use it as a benchmark to assess their painting skills objectively.

"Let's begin!"

With the rules set and no disagreements from both parties involved in the competition, a few apprentice painters began to lay out two tables with brushes, ink slabs, and paper.

"There are no restrictions to the topic, feel free to paint anything you desire to!"

Seeing that the both of them had taken their positions, Vice Guild Leader Wu said.

"Yes!"

Ji Mo gongzi nodded his head.

Since there were no restrictions, he could choose to paint what he was best at.

The mountains and streams that he drew before were not what he was good at. If he were to draw what he was the most adept in, he would surely be able to produce a painting of the third level.

He had just become a 1-star painter and was looking for an opportunity to increase his reputation when this fellow appeared from nowhere. The idiom 'delivering a pillow when one is craving for a nap' fitted the situation perfectly, Zhang Xuan's appearance was simply too timely!

Otherwise, Ji Mo wouldn't have gone to the extent of blowing the matter up.

"Alright, since there aren't any objections, you may begin now!"

Since the duo wasn't objectionable to the rules, Vice Guild Leader Wu waved his hands, gesturing for them to start.

"Alright!"

Ji Mo gongzi harrumphed coldly. With a swift movement, he picked up the brush, dipped it in the ink, and began drawing.

This time, in order to obtain a more convincing victory, he chose to use plenty of flamboyant techniques, winning him the loud cheers from the crowd.

"Do all of you think that Ji Mo gongzi will win?"

"Of course! Ji gongzi is the most talented painter in the younger generation. Even the guild leader has said that it is highly possible that he will take over his position in the future. How can he possibly lose to a countryside bumpkin?"

"That's true...."

"Un? Ji gongzi has already begun drawing, but why is that countryside bumpkin still standing idly? It can't be that his words are louder than his actions and that he doesn't know how to paint at all?"

"That may really be true.... Look, he is totally motionless...."

Mesmerized by Ji Mo gongzi's graceful brush strokes, everyone had been discussing Ji Mo gongzi excitedly, and only at this moment did they realize that the youngster he was competing against was standing motionlessly on the spot, his expression seeming to indicate a dilemma within.

"Is there anything wrong? Do you have any problem that you find hard to voice out? Feel free to speak."

Seeing him in such a state, Vice Guild Leader Wu asked.

"Oh, it's like that...."

Zhang Xuan scratched his head in embarrassment, "I've been thinking about it. If I were to simply paint and win him like that, I would be bullying him. Since I claimed that even a savage beast can paint better than him, may I ask.... are there any savage beasts here? Can I borrow one to use? Rest assured, after it's done with the painting.... I'll return it to you!"

"What?"

"He intends to use a savage beast to.... compete against Ji Mo gongzi?"

"The heck, surely I am hearing things!"

Everyone was dumbfounded, and they stared at the man as if he were a lunatic.

Even though savage beasts possess intelligence, it is insignificant in comparison to human thoughts. As such, it is impossible for a savage beast to be capable of painting.

Pitting a savage beast against an official painter in a painting contest....

How is that possible!

You must be pulling our legs!

Even if they weren't here, being able to see and hear it in person, they would have thought that the fellow was insane.

In fact, even though they were actually here in person witnessing the situation, they were doubting his sanity.

While everyone was just shocked, Ji Mo gongzi's body was already convulsing. Ten thousand imaginary divine beasts flew around his head and he nearly threw his brush at the other party's face.

Finding a savage beast to compete with him....

The heck, do you mean that I am not worthy of being your opponent?

He thought that he would be able to humiliate the other party once the results were out, but.... the painting had barely started, and the other party's contempt had by now seared his skin.

If that fellow were to really win with a savage beast, doesn't that mean that I am inferior to a beast?

Even I win, it would only mean that I am better than a beast....

The heck!

Ji Mo gongzi felt blood welling up in his mouth and that he was about to break down.

"Cough cough, even though savage beasts possess intelligence, they are incapable of painting. Are you.... certain of this?" Vice Guild Leader Wu was also astonished at the

youngster's request. He couldn't help but ask him once more.

He had seen people request for a longer duration, better quality paper, a better standard of ink.... Of all of these innumerable requests, he had never come across someone requesting for a savage beast!

Are you sure this isn't a joke?

"Yes, I am certain!"

Zhang Xuan nodded his head with a serious expression.

He could easily paint a fifth level work. If he were to take the painter examination, even if it wasn't sufficient for him to reach 3-star, he would be a 2-star pinnacle at the minimum.

With such a capability, for him to compete with a young fellow who had just passed the 1-star painter examination would be akin to bullying the weak.

Even if he were to win, it wouldn't be honorable!

However, even after he had affirmed his request, the other party didn't make a move. Therefore, Zhang Xuan asked, "Can it be that.... there aren't any savage beasts here? Or is looking for a savage beast too difficult a request?"

After all, this is the Painter Guild, not the Beast Hall. Can it be that savage beasts are difficult to find in Tianwu Royal City?

"Difficult...."

Everyone staggered.

This isn't the main point at all!

The main point is.... how can a savage beast be capable of drawing?

"Arrogant!"

While Vice Guild Leader Wu was at a loss, Vice Guild Leader Cheng's face darkened, and he flung his sleeves angrily.

He had immersed himself in painting for several decades now and he was well aware of the difficulty of this art. To wish to outdo an official painter at painting using a savage beast?

That was an incredibly arrogant thought.

Initially, he thought that this would be a valiant battle between two outstanding youths, but to think that the youngster before him would be such a conceited fellow!

"Why not.... I go out and look around? I know of a wild savage beast in the vicinity...."

Recognizing the persisting awkwardness, the green-robed attendant hesitated for a moment before speaking up.

"Go on!"

Zhang Xuan gestured.

"Yes!" The green-robed attendant rushed out immediately and in a short while, came running back with a savage beast in his embrace.

Rather than a savage beast, it was more appropriate to call it an undomesticated animal. Similar to dogs and cats that households kept, it didn't possess any fighting prowess. Oblivious to the reason why it was brought here, it had a confused look on its face.

Upon receiving the savage beast, Zhang Xuan took a quick look at it. Even though he wasn't very satisfied, the competition had long begun, and there wasn't time for him to be picky.

"Time to try out the abilities of a poison master!"

With the savage beast in his embrace, Zhang Xuan thought.

As for why he dared to make such a bet with his opponent, in claiming that he would use a savage beast to create his painting, it wasn't because he was arrogant, but rather because he had aces up his sleeves.

Even if a savage beast is tamed, it is impossible for it to obey exactly the thoughts of its owner. If one desires to create a painting that surpasses the second level, he cannot

place his hopes on something beyond his control. One has to have absolute control over the painting process.

As a 2-star beast tamer, it would have been impossible for him to control the actions of a savage beast precisely. However, after the trip to the Poison Hall, the situation had changed.

After ten days of studying in the Poison Hall, not only did Zhang Xuan manage to cultivate the Poison Body, his mastery of poison had also reached the level of a 2-star poison master.

More importantly, he had also gained an additional use for the Heaven's Path zhenqi. He is now able to convert it into tonic with a single thought and transform it into deadly poison with another.

The Heaven's Path zhenqi happened to be the ideal tool that allows him to control movements of a savage beast precisely using just his mind.

Stretching out his hands, he sent a surge of Heaven's Path zhenqi into the meridians of the savage beast that was in his embrace. Then, with a simple will, he distributed it into the various acupoints all over its body immediately.

"Time to start!"

Now that the preparations were in place, he had the savage beast roll around in the ink before casually throwing it onto the large piece of xuan paper.

"Is he really having the savage beast draw for him?"

"I would like to see what kind of painting he can create!"

"I've seen this savage beast and it does not possess any intelligence. What kind of painting can it possibly draw?"

....

Seeing that Zhang Xuan wasn't joking and that he had soaked the savage beast in ink and had it step onto the xuan paper, the crowd burst into an uproar.

To have a savage beast paint....

And win against an official painter?

Brother, are you daydreaming, or are you just pulling a prank?

"Preposterous!"

Vice Guild Leader Cheng's face steeled.

Painting is a respectable and refined occupation; to actually call a savage beast splashing ink around as painting is clearly an act of provocation.

He had decided to chase this fellow out the moment the competition ended.

He couldn't allow the art of painting to be insulted like that.

Feeling displeased within, he was glaring at Zhang Xuan in fury when Vice Guild Leader Wu's words rang beside his ear.

"Something is wrong. Cheng Feng, look!"

"What's wrong?" He turned around to look at his old friend, only to see him staring at the youngster's painting in bewilderment.

Frowning, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng turned his head over as well, and with a single glance, he became stupefied.

"How.... How is this possible?"

The savage beast on the xuan paper hesitated for a moment before beginning to saunter on the paper, leaving behind one plum flower after another in its wake.

There wasn't a specific pattern to those plum flower marks, but they went along a straight line and seemed as if they were held hanging by a formless vine.

Shouldn't an unintelligent savage beast, who was splashed with ink all over, run away the moment it was released? Why would it walk on the paper slowly without the slightest repetition in its footsteps?

"It's a type of beast taming technique!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu's voice sounded in his ears.

"That's right!"

Hearing his old friend's words, Cheng Feng came to a realization.

Not only did the savage beast not escape or run about, it walked in a straight line on the paper. This showed that it was listening to someone's orders, and to be able to get a savage beast to obey his commands immediately.... It had to be an extremely advanced beast taming technique!

Can it be that.... this extremely young fellow is a beast tamer?

"However, so what if he has the ability to tame a savage beast? No matter how neat these footsteps are, it isn't a painting. Naturally, it is impossible for it to reach the level of Reality Depiction and, not to mention, Spiritual Canvas."

Cheng Feng was surprised but he shook his head nevertheless.

Even though Reality Depiction was merely the first level of painting, countless apprentices and painting fanatics had to be locked out from its gates for several years, and sometimes, even several decades before it could be achieved.

So what if that youngster can control movements of a savage beast using techniques belonging to beast tamers?

Savage beasts being savage beasts, it is impossible for them to devote any emotion or artistic conception to the painting. It is just like controlling a puppet, it is impossible to instill spirit into the work!

"You're right!" Vice Guild Leader nodded in agreement.

He was also curious what the fellow was up to.

Padah!

Just as they were pondering what kind of painting the youngster would show them, the savage beast, which was advancing on the xuan paper, fell down abruptly and the ink on its body blotted an area of the paper black.

"Seems like we had been overthinking...."

Initially, the plum blossoms that the savage beast created with its footstep looked satisfactory, appearing to be a proper piece of painting. Even though Cheng Feng didn't think that the youngster could achieve much with the savage beast, it was nonetheless a novelty. However, with the fall, the entire painting was ruined immediately.

That was to say.... the painting had been turned into scrap.

"Indeed, how is it possible that a savage beast can create a painting?" Cheng Feng harrumphed.

"You're right!" Vice Guild Leader Wu agreed.

Shaking their heads, they chose to ignore this attention-seeking fellow and turned to Ji Mo gongzi instead.

As expected of a genius. Even though he was infuriated just a moment ago, he hadn't allowed those emotions to interfere with his painting. With swift brushstrokes, the outline of the painting was already in sight.

It was a peony that stood proudly amidst a cluster of flowers. It carried a powerful disposition which made the other flowers pale in comparison, resembling a monarch.

"The King of Flowers is the peony, and his painting has brought out the refined and prideful nature of the peony that causes surrounding floras to bow in deference. His painting will probably attain the third level, Infused Intentions, the moment it is completed!"

Cheng Feng's eyes lit up.

"That's right. Ji Mo is indeed a promising bud. As long as we do a good job grooming him, we might have a legendary figure emerge in our guild!"

Vice Guild Master Wu nodded in agreement.

As 2-star painters, they were well-versed in paintings. Although Ji Mo gongzi's work had yet to be completed, they were nevertheless able to tell a thing or two just from its outline.

This painting was clearly of a much higher grade than that of the Breeze By the Mountain and Stream, the conception behind the painting being at a much higher level as well. As long as there weren't any large deviations, it would surely reach the level of Infused Intentions.

Even if it were the most basic standard under Infused Intentions, to be able to create a painting of the third level despite having just become a 1-star painter showed that Ji Mo gongzi was indeed talented.

"Look, Ji Mo gongzi's painting is about to be done...."

"What a beautiful peony, I like this painting!"

"This is too beautiful...."

....

The two vice guild leaders were still conversing when Ji Mo gongzi had already begun the final touches on his painting. His brush flew about the xuan paper, and an alluring peony appeared before everyone's eyes.

Hu!

Then, with a light jerk of his hands, the last stroke was completed.

Huala!

The moment the painting was completed, a sweet scent of flowers struck everyone's nose, as if they had stepped into a garden of flowers. A single peony stood out proudly from amidst the crowd, outshining every single other surrounding flora.

"This is a painting of the third level!"

"It has reached the level of Infused Intentions, incredible!"

"I've already said so, how can Ji Mo gongzi possibly lose...."

....

Most of the people present were either here to purchase paintings or were a fan of Ji

Mo, and naturally, would have some understanding of paintings as well. They might not have been able to estimate the level of the painting when he was still working on it, but the effects that occurred upon completion allowed them to recognize it immediately.

Even a 1-star painter would be incapable of producing a painting of the level of Infused Intentions every single time he paints.

It was even rarer to see one being created in a public setting and, furthermore, in a competition.

"I've completed my painting!"

Throwing his brush aside, Ji Mo gongzi looked at his completed work and nodded in satisfaction.

The best way to win a lady's fancy was to paint flowers. The peony was the king of the flowers, so he spent a huge effort to practice it. He might not be able to ensure that any other of his works would be able to reach the third level, but he had practiced painting this for more than a thousand times. If he were to paint it, nine out of ten times, it would be a painting of Infused Intentions.

Clearly, it didn't disappoint him this time as well, having reached the level he desired.

Even some 1-star painters who had immersed themselves in painting for more than a decade would find it hard to produce a painting of the third level. To have produced a painting of this level so easily despite just becoming a 1-star painter, regardless of the duel's outcome, his goal of making a name for himself had already been accomplished.

"You acted so arrogantly just now, let's see what you are capable of painting."

Harrumphing coldly, Mo Ji put down his artwork and turned toward Zhang Xuan.

At this moment, the savage beast finally jumped off the xuan paper.

Because the savage beast was soaked with excessive ink, the painting, from the plum blossom footsteps which the savage beast imprinted, to the blotch caused by its fall, was smudged heavily. Even until now, the ink had yet to dry and the entire piece was glistening with ink water.

Especially for the patch which was created due to the fall earlier, because of the savage beast's tough fur, a chaotic mess was created.

"Is this the savage beast painting you spoke of? Haha! How hilarious!"

Ji Mo gongzi nearly laughed his lower jaw off.

He thought that since the other party acted so high and mighty just now, he would really be able to create some impressive painting through a savage beast. Yet, to think that this was all he was capable of....

Do you call this a painting?

Even random flinging of ink onto a paper would be much better than this!

"What nonsense is he painting? To dare to compete with Ji gongzi, he sure is laughable!"

"If you call this a painting, won't I be considered a painter as well?"

"Ignorant fellow, let's see how you embarrass yourself later on!"

Hearing Ji Mo's laughter, the crowd turned their gazes to Zhang Xuan, and a scornful expression appeared on their faces.

Can the random spilling of ink be considered a painting?

What a joke!

"Are you done with your.... painting?"

Lifting his hand to interrupt the crowd's discussion, Vice Guild Leader Wu turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

"Un, I'm almost done...."

At this point, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

If someone were to pay careful attention, the person would notice that his body was trembling and that his face had become pale.

After browsing through books on poison in the Poison Hall, Zhang Xuan had gained the ability to convert the Heaven's Path zhenqi into tonic or poison with a single thought.

He had been secretly controlling the savage beast using the zhenqi he left inside its body, making it behave as he desired on the paper. Even though it had only been ten minutes or so, it was sufficient to wear out his spirit, sending him into a state of weakness.

"Seems like my cultivation is still too weak...."

Zhang Xuan lamented. Taking a deep breath, he started to pump his zhenqi to rejuvenate his body.

He had been converting the zhenqi he deposited in the savage beast into either poison or tonic to stimulate its acupoints, so as to induce the savage beast to act the way he intended. Even though it sounded simple, it had a high requirement on one's Soul Depth.

If not for Zhang Xuan's Soul Depth exceeding 5.0, it would have been an impossible task.

But more importantly, the savage beast was of an extremely low tier, making it easy to manipulate. If it were any stronger savage beast, given Zhang Xuan's current cultivation, it would have been an impossible task to manipulate them.

"Almost done?"

Disappointment surfaced on Vice Guild Leader Wu's face.

He was wondering what formidable painting the youngster could create, but to think that this would just be it....

"Alright, since Ji Mo's painting is completed, and this youngster's painting is roughly done, let's just announce the results right away!"

Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng said.

"Alright!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu nodded. Pointing to Ji Mo gongzi's work, he appraised, "Painter Ji's peony creates ripples in the surrounding spiritual energy and it has a deep artistic conception. Undoubtedly, it has reached the third level of painting, Infused Intentions."

After which, he turned to Zhang Xuan's work and said, "As for this painting, I am unable to understand its meaning. In my opinion.... it is nothing at all...."

After hesitating for a moment, Vice Guild Leader Wu continued, "Thus, my verdict is that.... it is Painter Ji's victory!"

"I share the same opinion as Vice Guild Leader Wu!"

Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng nodded in agreement.

"I've won...."

Hearing the results from the judges, Ji Mo gongzi turned to Zhang Xuan and sneered, "Since the results are out, are you going to kneel down and then scam on your own two feet, or do you want me to break your legs before throwing you out of the Painter Guild?"

Before the competition, they had decided to have the loser kneel down and apologize to the other party before leaving the Painter Guild, never to return.

Now that Zhang Xuan had lost, how could he simply allow this matter to slip by?

"This...."

Seeing the savage expression on Ji Mo's face as he pressurized Zhang Xuan, the two vice guild leaders glanced at each another. Initially, they had intended to mediate between the two, but eventually, they simply shook their heads and chose to stay out of this matter.

This foreign lad had shown blatant disrespect for painting by having a savage beast paint in his stead, and the both of them thought that he should be taught a lesson. Otherwise, wouldn't it signify there are no consequences for desecrating the Painter Guild?

"Ah? You've made a verdict just like that?"

After resting for a moment, Zhang Xuan finally regained some strength. Upon hearing Ji Mo gongzi's gleeful words, he lifted his head.

"Why? Do you refuse to acknowledge the verdict by the two vice guild leaders?"

Ji Mo harrumphed coldly.

"The two vice guild leaders are 2-star painters and I believe in their eye for painting. Just that.... I had only mentioned that my work was almost done, I have never said that it was done...."

Zhang Xuan shook his head.

"Are you claiming that your work is incomplete? What do you want to do then? Do you intend to lift your brush and continue painting?"

Ji Mo gongzi was taken aback.

"Since I said that this is a savage beast painting, naturally, I won't use my brush. Just that, this painting is still lacking one final step...."

Zhang Xuan smiled.

"One final step?"

The entire crowd was startled.

The painting that you created through the savage beast is such rubbish, do you think that adding some final touches will make any difference?

Under the situation that you aren't going to use the brush, do you think that the conclusion can really be changed?

"I think that he's just unwilling to admit defeat!"

"To be bragging despite the fact that he has lost, how can there be such a person in the world!"

"Shameless!"

Everyone began to clamor and looks of disgust fell on Zhang Xuan from all around.

Weren't you behaving very arrogantly?

You're already nearing your end, why are you still putting on an act?

Even Vice Guild Leader Cheng and Vice Guild Leader Wu were perplexed.

It is just a layer of ink water on top of the paper. Without using a brush, is there really a way to turn it into a painting?

"You say that there's a final step before its completion. Fine, let's see what you have to say after this then!"

Ji Mo gongzi laughed coldly.

"Alright, I'll start then!"

Disregarding the commotion around him, Zhang Xuan walked up to the painting, grabbed the xuan paper by the corner and gave it a gentle shake.

Hualala!

The ink water on the surface of the painting flowed down, dyeing the entire painting.

"Alright, I've completed my final step!"

Placing the xuan paper back on the table casually, Zhang Xuan smiled.

"That's all?"

Everyone was taken aback. They thought that the youngster's final step would be some incredible move, but to think that it would be just a gentle shake. For a moment, they were completely dumbfounded.

"Wait, something's not right.... look!"

Just as they were wondering what that fellow was up to, a person from the crowd suddenly shouted.

Upon hearing the voice, Vice Guild Leader Cheng and Vice Guild Leader Wu turned to look at the xuan paper. Instantly, their bodies began to tremble uncontrollably, with their faces turning pale and their eyes widening.

A moment later, words of disbelief escaped through their mouth.

"How.... how.... is this possible?"

Chapter 290

A Draw?

With a gentle shake from Zhang Xuan, the ink on the xuan paper flowed down. The many footsteps left behind by the savage beast were linked together by a dark stroke, forming a painting of haughty and unyielding plum blossoms.

The portion where the ink flowed through formed a black dry tree bark, on which, plum blossoms bloomed sporadically. Looking rather desolate from afar, one could feel bone-chilling intent from the painting, as if the bitter winter had struck.

The location where the savage beast fell formed two glaring boulders, and the marks left behind by its fur formed ridges of differing depths on the surface of the boulder.

Plum blossoms grew from the crevices within the boulders, standing proudly in the frigid weather. Ji Mo gongzi made use of a field of flowers to accentuate the nobility of the peony. On the other hand, these plum blossoms didn't have any other flowers to compare to, but one couldn't help but sense its haughtiness, with nothing that dared to vie with it, that there was no one that did not fear to stand beside it.

Even without the intention to vie for supremacy, it was able to surpass the radiance of all other flowers.

Upon seeing this flower, one could almost see the painter standing loneliness by the edge of the world. So what if they disregard me? So what if they don't understand me? All I desire is to stand proud and remain true to my conscience!

"I.... Why am I crying?"

"I feel as though I saw a man uncomprehended by the world, but even so, he continued to step forward bravely, without the slightest intention to retreat!"

"Is this.... the third level of painting, Infused Intentions?"

"That must be it! Otherwise, it is impossible for our emotions to resonate with it with just a single glance...."

....

The surroundings fell silent.

In that moment, many people's emotions were influenced by the desolate mood in the painting, and their eyes reddened in agitation.

A painting with high artistic conception is able to influence the state of mind in its viewers. Clearly, this painting is one such masterpiece.

"A painting that was drawn by a savage beast.... has reached the third level, Infused Intentions?"

Seeing the crowd being influenced by the desolate beauty of the winter plum blossoms, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng's mouth quivered, and his body trembled.

Since others were able to tell the level of the painting, naturally, he did so quickly. With just a shake of the painting, the other party was able to turn a nothing into a masterpiece. Not only was the spirit of the painting overwhelming, its artistic conception shone through in an instant.

Even they, as 2-star painters, would need a long period of preparation before they can create a painting of such level.

Yet, for a savage beast to create such a painting by walking a few steps, rolling about, followed by a mere shake....

Even though it happened right before their eyes, they nevertheless couldn't help but suspect that it was a dream.

It was inconceivable.

"The crux to the painting is that final shake!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu contemplated for a moment before saying, "How much ink is left on the xuan paper, how one should shake it, and how much force should one use, one has to take all of these into account to determine the flow of the ink to form the tree branch to finish the painting.... One has to imprint and remember all of these details perfectly into mind before one can create this painting. Even the slightest error could spell failure!"

"Indeed. It may seem simple, but it is actually a profound movement. With different ink and paper, the effects would be different. To be able to reach such a state with a mere shake, his eye of discernment and mastery of painting.... Even I would be unable to do it...."

Even though he was reluctant to admit it, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng nodded in agreement.

Previously, it was the savage beast who was in charge of painting; the youngster didn't do anything at all. However, the most important part of the painting was the final shake. It was just like adding the eyes to a painted dragon; with the slightest error, the result would be completely different. If not for Zhang Xuan's perfect control over the final shake, this painting of the third level would be nothing at all.

And for him to find the ideal strength and method to shake off the ink on the painting....

This meant that he had absolute control over the painting! He knew what the product would be, and what level it would reach....

This required a profound understanding of painting! For one to picture what the complete painting would be like down to the minor details.... Even their guild leader, a 3-star painter, would be incapable of such a feat!

"This.... impossible...."

Upon witnessing the stalk of plum blossoms appear with the shake, Ji Mo gongzi, who was gleefully waiting for Zhang Xuan to make a fool of himself, staggered backward in shock. His face paled and looked as if he were going insane.

The other party had just randomly dipped a savage beast into a pool of ink and threw it on a xuan paper, and it became a painting of the third level....

When did a painting of the third level become so easy to create?

He had worked so hard, to the point that he almost vomited blood, just so that he could refine his painting to reach this level. Yet, the other party easily....

It can't be that my talents are inferior to a savage beast?

The green-robed attendant who had brought Zhang Xuan in was also yanking at his ears. If not for the inappropriate occasion, he would have gone on a rampage by now.

As an attendant of the Painter Guild, he earned a mere several thousand gold coins a month, and even at best, his wages would only reach ten thousand. Yet, the other party was able to create a painting which was worth several million just by throwing a savage beast on a paper.....

The heck!

Why was he working so hard then! If he were to capture the savage beast to draw for him, wouldn't he have long become a millionaire?

The numerous apprentices who carried the tables before also felt tears welling up in their eyes.

Of them, there were those who had spent more than a decade on painting, but even so, their painting could only reach the level of Reality Depiction at best. Spiritual Canvas and Infused Intentions were way out of their reach, and they didn't dare to think about it.

Seeing a savage beast produce a better painting that they could, in that instant, they felt that all of their hard work in the past few years had been.... completely useless.

It was already a miracle that they didn't break down on the spot.

"The two vice guild leaders, may I know whether it is my victory or my loss with this painting?" Seeing the painting take the shape as he had planned, Zhang Xuan turned to the two elders with a smile.

It was just as the two vice guild leaders thought, the crux to the painting was his final shake.

Even if he was able to control the savage beast perfectly, how could this create a painting of the third level?

In order to turn the ink-filled paper into a complete painting with his final shake, he had to make use of the ability of the Library of Heaven's Path to avoid all mistakes.

Since there were no mistakes in his movements, it had to be correct.

The timing, the strength, the shaking method, grasping the paper.... All of these had to be paid attention to. A single error would cause the entire painting to fall apart.

It was fortunate that he succeeded.

"This...."

The two vice guild leaders glanced at one another.

"Your Winter Plum Blossoms Painting and Painter Ji's Peony Painting have both reached the third level. Even though the two paintings are of completely different style, they are both on the same level. Thus, I announce that...." Hesitating for a moment, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng declared, ".... it is a draw!"

"Draw?"

Zhang Xuan shook his head, although he had expected such a situation.

In terms of quality, his painting was clearly of a much higher standard than Ji Mo gongzi's Peony Painting. However, as their competition had a wager at stake, and the latter would be a future elite of the Painter Guild if he were declared to be the loser, wouldn't that mean that he has to kneel down, apologize, and leave the guild for good?

If that really happened, they would have to lose a valuable talent.

Declaring that it was a draw could avoid offending any of the two parties. In a sense, it was the perfect conclusion.

Of course, this Ji Mo gongzi wouldn't appear as dashing as he was before. Even though it was a draw, it was with a savage beast. In other words, he was no different from a beast.... No matter where he went, people would definitely be gossiping about him.

Even so, Zhang Xuan was indifferent to his plight. The other party had it coming.

"A draw? To think that it would be a draw!"

"This is for the best...."

"That's right, it's best not to sully the harmonious spirit among fellow painters...."

....

Hearing the verdict, the crowd broke into a commotion.

"That's good. The two of you are genius painters, so you both should try to get along...."

After the declaration, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng smiled in an attempt to mediate the conflict. However, Ji Mo gongzi took a deep breath and stepped forward. "Vice guild leaders, hold it for a moment!"

The crowd immediately turned to look at him.

"Everyone has seen the painting just now. The crux of the painting lies in his final shake. If not for that, it wouldn't even reach Reality Depiction, needless to say, Infused Intentions!"

Ji Mo gongzi turned to look at Zhang Xuan and sneered coldly, "That's to say, his drawing was completed with the effort of a human and a beast. It was only with a combined effort from them that they were able to match up to my standard, so how can he be worthy of becoming my equal?"

Everyone was taken aback.

It was obvious that having a savage beast in a painting process would only drag one down. To be capable of creating a painting of Infused Intentions under such circumstances bore testimony to the incredible painting mastery that the other party possessed.

This fact couldn't be any clearer on everyone's mind, yet he dared to spout such words. He has truly thrown away his dignity for this competition.

But even so, there was a sliver of truth to his words. It was indeed a collaboration between Zhang Xuan and the savage beast!

Since this was a competition between Zhang Xuan and Ji Mo, there should just be a single person painting. No one else should be allowed to touch the painting; even a single word of guidance cannot be accepted.

The plum blossoms by the savage beast's footsteps and the tree bark from Zhang Xuan's shake.... These two were essential to forming this art piece, and without any of

them, it would have been incomplete.

Given that this was a collaboration work against an individual, it was indeed.... an infringement of fairness.

"Oh, so you mean that...."

Seeing how shameless the other party was, Zhang Xuan didn't get angry. Instead, he turned to gaze at the person squarely.

"Simple, I've won this competition. Since you have only managed to reach my standard through a collaboration, your skills can only be said to be inferior to mine!" Ji Mo gongzi smiled coldly.

"Painter Ji, a draw isn't a bad conclusion either...."

Not expecting the other party to be so lacking in sportsmanship, Vice Guild Leader Wu felt rather displeased.

Can a savage beast really know how to paint?

It is clearly that it was through the sole efforts of the painter that a painting of such quality could be created.

Even though it could be said to be a collaboration by a human and a beast, it was due to the incredible painting mastery of this youngster that this painting could reach such a level. We are already giving you leeway to back down by declaring a draw, yet you don't know how to be contented?

Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng was also incensed by the other party's actions. Just as he was about to speak up, Zhang Xuan shook his hands casually and looked over with a faint smile, "Ji gongzi's words make sense. Since you believe that this is a collaboration between me and the savage beast, we'll take it as that. However, since you don't consider this a draw, I would like to ask.... under what kind of circumstances will you be willing to admit defeat?"

"Want me to admit defeat?"

Ji Mo gongzi sneered coldly, "I am a fair person, so I will not use your collaboration as a reason to proclaim my victory. If your painting had reached the fourth level of

Breathtaking Verisimilitude, I would have admitted my defeat immediately. However, it's a pity.... that it isn't! Given that your collaboration has barely reached my level, how can I consider this a draw?"

"Your words are logical, I can't find any words to refute them!" Zhang Xuan didn't seem to be vexed by the other party's words. Instead, he shook his head with a smile.

"Since you've nothing to say, just admit defeat...."

Ji Mo gongzi's eyes shone brightly. Just as he was about to continue speaking, the edges of the lips of the youngster before him curled up, and he looked at him pitifully, "Are you that certain that.... this painting has only reached the third level?"

"What do you mean?"

Ji Mo gongzi glanced at the xuan paper on the table. As it was just a moment ago that the painting had been completed, the ink on it had yet to dry. The painting was outstanding, but it was clear that it had only reached the third level. Thus, he sneered coldly, "Stop putting on an act here. If you wish to admit defeat, hurry up. Even if you were to argue about it the entire day, it's impossible for the painting to reach the fourth level...."

"That might not necessarily be the case...."

Zhang Xuan calmly turned around and said, "Vice Guild Leader Wu, I've something which I need to trouble you with!"

"Feel free to speak!" Vice Guild Leader Wu nodded.

"May I know if there are any fire torches in the guild? May I borrow one?" Zhang Xuan asked.

The Painter Guild used Night Illumination Pearls as the source of light for its interiors. Its radiance was gentle as bright as the morning sky.

But despite the brightness, it didn't provide any warmth. Furthermore, it was in the middle of the autumn, and the room was slightly cold. As everyone present was a cultivator, they didn't pay the matter any heed.

"There is!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu glanced at the youngster doubtfully for a moment before waving his hands. An apprentice stepped out from the room, and soon, returned with a fire torch in his hands.

"Bring it to the painting to warm it!" Instead of receiving the fire torch, Zhang Xuan instructed the apprentice.

"Yes!"

The apprentice glanced at Vice Guild Leader Wu, and upon seeing him nod, walked to the Winter Plum Blossoms Painting.

Under the heat of the fire, the wet ink began to coagulate.

Hong long!

Under the warmth of the torch, a change occurred in the ink, inducing a vastly different sensation in the painting from before.

A slight trace of white appeared in the four corners of the inky black flower buds, as though the flower was beginning to bloom. For a moment, the crowd could smell the aroma of plum blossoms in the air.

Wu wu wu!

A few butterflies flew into the room from nowhere and landed on the painting, as if they were attracted by the aroma of flowers, then lingering on the surface for an extremely long time.

"Is this.... Breathtaking Verisimilitude?"

"How is this possible?"

....

Everyone's body shuddered. They felt that they were about to go insane.

Before the ink dried, it was clearly only at the level of Infused Intentions. Yet, the moment it dried, it became a fourth level painting. How did this situation happen?

However, if the painting hadn't reached the level of Breathtaking Verisimilitude, how could those butterflies be attracted to it? And how could they catch the faint aroma of plum blossoms in the air?

Deng deng deng deng!

Ji Mo gongzi staggered backward with a pale face.

He had just claimed that he would admit defeat if the other party's painting reached the fourth level, and never in his dreams did he expect that it would become one the moment it was dried with a burning torch....

Are you for real?

He has examined the painting multiple times to ascertain that it was only at Infused Intentions. How could the heat from a fire torch raise, so easily, the level of the painting?

"This can't be true.... You must have cheated!"

Shaking his head vehemently, he was unable to believe the sight before him. He howled in a frenzy.

"Cheated?"

Zhang Xuan shook his head. His gaze swept through the surroundings and finally, fell on Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng. "Vice guild leader, are you able to tell the reason?"

"I can roughly see a thing or two, but I'm unsure whether my judgment is correct!"

With a grim face, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng spoke of his conjecture, "The savage beast which did the painting just now is known as the Verdant Alacrity Beast, and it likes to build its nest in the mud. On the other hand, our ink originates from the Black Inkstone and mud carries substances that neutralize the Black Inkstone. That's why, upon the heat of the fire torch, the color of the ink became lighter."

"The Verdant Alacrity Beast that was brought here is likely to have just been caught, so there are traces of mud still on its body. The mud is mixed into the ink ground from the Black Inkstone, and after some heating, the effects were displayed immediately, creating the sight of the flowers blooming, thus.... inducing a rise in the level of the

painting!"

"To be able to do this requires a profound understanding of beast taming, as well as the properties of the various materials. You...."

At this point, Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng stared at Zhang Xuan with eyes filled with disbelief.

The sight before seemed magical; a painting of the third level was brought up by an entire level just using the heat from a torch. However, it was actually a fusion of numerous knowledge to create that exact outcome.

In fact, even without the heat of the torch, this painting would automatically rise to the level of Breathtaking Verisimilitude in a day's time.

And to do this, one has to have a deep understanding of beast taming, the properties of the substances involved.... And numerous other matters. Everything must be fully within grasp, and this youngster who hasn't even reached twenty yet has managed to achieve this....

The heck!

Is it the world that's mad, or have I gone mad?

Chapter 291

Painting of the Fifth Level, Done!

"Is such a thing possible?"

"To know the constituent of the ink and the mud on the savage beast beforehand, is he still a human?"

....

Listening to the explanation, the crowd widened their eyes in disbelief, as if it were the most absurd thing they had ever heard.

Painting a picture using a savage beast that was caught at random, and you were able to create a Breathtaking Verisimilitude art piece which only 2-star painters are capable of producing.... Brother, you are about to break through the heavens!

"Vice Guild Leader Cheng does indeed possess a superior eye of discernment!"

Hearing the other party point out the reason, Zhang Xuan complimented.

Even though the other party's words were not perfect, the idea was there.

While he was correct about the mud on the Verdant Alacrity Beast, he failed to explain why they appeared so perfectly on each corner of the plum blossom.

Naturally, it was due to his manipulation.

However, since the other party had explained it this way, he did not bother to add on.

"You said that as long as this painting reaches the fourth level, you will admit defeat. Do you still have anything else to say?"

Zhang Xuan glanced at Ji Mo gongzi with a sharp gaze.

"I...."

Ji Mo gongzi's knees caved in, and he fell to the ground. His face went as pale as a sheet of paper.

Initially, he thought that his victory was certain and that nothing in the world could change it. Never in his dreams did he expect that the other party would hide a trump card within his painting!

By heating it with a fire torch, the painting was brought up by entire level....

Ji Mo gongzi could only hear the thunder rumbling in his mind, and he nearly burst into tears.

At this moment, all he felt within himself was regret. Of all people, why did he have to provoke this fellow? Furthermore, he could have accepted the draw, yet he had to push his luck. In the end.... he simply dug his own grave.

Feeling greatly depressed, he turned to Vice Guild Leader Cheng.

Initially, Vice Guild Leader Cheng intended to ignore his plight. However, after a moment of hesitation, he sighed and asked, "Little brother, how should I address you?"

"Zhang Xuan!"

"Brother Zhang Xuan, you and Painter Ji are pillars that will prop up our guild. On my account, can you.... forgo the bet?" Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng asked.

Ji Mo was courting death. Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng was already siding with him by declaring the match a draw, yet he wasn't content with the result, choosing to push the boundaries.

Now that the other party has brought the painting up to the fourth level without having made a single action, Ji Mo had no choice but to admit defeat.

Just that.... if he were to admit defeat, he has to carry out the bet they promised on, and this bet would be too huge of a loss for both this talent and the guild.

"Forgo the bet? I'm sorry, but I don't have the habit of not retaliating when someone has already climbed over my head!"

Waving his hands casually, Zhang Xuan uttered, "Kneel down and admit your mistake.

Then, leave the Painter Guild and never return."

If the other party had merely provoked him once or twice, Zhang Xuan wouldn't have been bothered to waste his efforts on him. However, since the other party had chosen to cross his line time and time again, he shouldn't be blamed for getting nasty.

"This...."

Hearing those words, Vice Guild Leader Cheng and Vice Guild Leader Wu exchanged gazes, shook their heads simultaneously, and fell silent.

Since Ji Mo has lost the bet, he was expected to carry it out. Otherwise, if words spread that the Painter Guild was siding with their own people, the prestige it had built up in the capital would crumble.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was unwilling to give in even after the vice guild leader had pleaded on his behalf, Ji Mo's face darkened, "Fine, I'll apologize to you!"

After which, he kneeled to the floor. Glaring at Zhang Xuan with a grudge so deep as though the other party had killed his father, he spat, "It's my fault for provoking you. I apologize to you!"

"Scram!"

The other party was clearly insincere in his apology, but Zhang Xuan wasn't bothered. In his eyes, Ji Mo was nothing more than a pesky fly.

"Scram?"

Ji Mo stood up resentfully and he sneered, "Hmph, I may have lost the bet, but you don't have the right to prevent me from entering the Painter Guild! Even I leave today, I can still return tomorrow. I am an official painter of the Painter Guild, do you think that a mere bet can restrain me? Dream on!"

"This...."

Hearing Ji Mo's sneer, the crowd felt despise for this rising painter. However, they couldn't help but agree with the other party's words.

No matter how mediocre and unseemly Ji Mo gongzi was, he was nevertheless an

official painter after having passed the examination. Even if the bet could cause him to leave temporarily, it was clearly impossible to ban him from entering the guild for good.

"The bet can't restrain you?" Zhang Xuan stroked his chin, him appearing to be deep in thoughts.

"That's right! Unless you camp outside the guild every day, I will still return, without a doubt! Haha, I might have lost this time, but it can't be considered your victory either!"

Ji Mo gongzi put on a 'so what can you do about it' expression gleefully.

His words were true. No matter who it was, it would be impossible to camp outside the Painter Guild forever. The moment Zhang Xuan left, the other party would be able to easily return back in.

After all, it is just a verbal bet, not an official contract. Even if I do not comply with the bet, what can you do to me?

"I won't be camping here. However, if you were to return while I am away, it will indeed look bad on me!"

When a human tosses aside his pride, he will feel invincible. Initially, Zhang Xuan thought that this fellow would value his dignity, given how he had won himself the heart of countless ladies.

Yet, to think that he would be so shameless. Thus, Zhang Xuan could only nod his head in agreement, "This is indeed a dilemma. However... this isn't any big issue, and there's a simple solution to it!"

"A simple solution? Only 3-star painters are qualified to issue a ban. Are you thinking of banning me from the Painter Guild? Dream on...."

Ji Mo gongzi sneered coldly.

Only painters who have reached a minimum of 3-star have the right to order a permanent ban on specific people. In Ji Mo's opinion, no matter how incredible Zhang Xuan's painting skill was, he could only be a 2-star painter at maximum.

Since he wasn't a 3-star painter, how could he ban him?

"3-star painters can issue bans?" Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before nodding his head. "Then.... I'll take the 3-star painter examination first then!"

"Take the 3-star painter examination?"

"Is this person sleepwalking? To actually say that he wants to take the 3-star painter examination?"

"He must be joking! While I admit that he's formidable for being able to create a fourth level painting, he is still a far way off from reaching the level of a 3-star painter!"

Shocked by Zhang Xuan's words, the crowd nearly fainted.

Of the entire Tianwu Kingdom, only the guild leader has reached the level of a 3-star painter, it being so obvious that to do so isn't any simple feat. Do you think that you can pass the examination just because you want to?

Speaking so arrogantly, aren't you afraid that the heavens will punish you?

Even the two vice guild leaders couldn't help but shake their heads to his words.

The youngsters nowadays are complacent, unable to realize there is a huge world beyond what they are able to see and imagine.

Even though it was just a level of difference between 3-star and 2-star, the gap was just like the divide between heaven and earth. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been stuck at the level of a 2-star pinnacle for so long.

They weren't the only ones. There were more than a dozen 2-star painter in the Tianwu Kingdom Painter guild, but there was only one 3-star painter. The disparity between a 2-star and a 3-star painter wasn't something that just anyone could fathom.

Yet, to say so easily that he would take the examination....

The ignorant sure is fearless!

"Haha! This is the funniest joke I've heard today!" Ji Mo gongzi sneered coldly. "Don't become complacent just because you happened to create a painting of the fourth level.

You're still way too far from becoming a 3-star painter!"

Disregarding the conceited Ji Mo gongzi, Zhang Xuan walked up to the two vice guild leaders, hesitated for a moment, before asking sheepishly.

"Actually, I'm here to take the painter examination. That.... I would like to ask how does the apprentice examination work?"

Putong!

Everyone fell to the ground.

The heck! Didn't you just declare haughtily that you would take the 3-star painter examination? Yet, to ask about how the apprentice examination work....

Brother, you must still be sleeping!

Besides, you just created a painting of the fourth level, which means that your skill is on par with a 2-star painter. How can you not even know how the apprentice examination works?

"How does the apprentice examination work? You.... It can't be that you aren't even an apprentice?"

Realizing something, Vice Guild Leader Wu could not help but ask.

"Cough cough, that's right. I've never taken the apprentice examination. The reason why I'm here today is to give the examination a try...."

Zhang Xuan nodded his head as if it was the most natural thing to do in this world.

Pu!

Everyone's eyes fell to the floor.

The two vice guild leaders shuddered at the same time, and they nearly vomited blood.

Being not even an apprentice, you dare to challenge an official painter and wager with him.... Aren't you being too bold!

Furthermore, to be able to easily utilize a savage beast to create a painting of the fourth level.... Despite not even being an apprentice, your skills and experience are clearly higher than ours!

Are you sure that you aren't lying to us?

More importantly, you speak so lightly of the examination as if it were nothing....

Other people have to put in the grueling effort just to pass the painter examination. Yet, from your tone, it sounds as if you're doing this just because you've some free time....

Fine!

You do seem to have the ability to do so anyway!

Suppressing the depression welling up in them with great effort, Vice Guild Leader Wu began to introduce the examination.

"The examination for painters isn't as complicated compared to the occupations. One doesn't need to take the examinations one by one; as long as one is able to create an art piece to prove that his skills have already reached a certain level, he is qualified for the rank. For example, a person who has created a first level Reality Depiction work is qualified to become an apprentice painter, and a person who has created a second level Spiritual Canvas is qualified to become a 1-star painter. Given that you have just created a painting of the fourth level, you are already qualified to apply for the 2-star painter rank."

"Ah? It's that easy?"

Not expecting the painter examination to be so much easier than that of the other occupations, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. "Then, what is the requisite to apply for a 3-star painter rank?"

"A 3-star painter has to create a painting of the fifth level, Spirit Creation. There is a huge gap between the fifth level and the fourth level, and of the entire guild, only our guild leader has reached this level!"

Seeing that the other party was still hung up on this matter, Vice Guild Leader Wu tried to persuade him, "Given that you're able to create a painting of the fourth level at your

current age, your talent is top-notch. Furthermore, you have never undergone professional painting training. If you study diligently under a true master, you will surely be able to create a painting of the fifth level in less than a decade and pass the 3-star painter examination. As such, there's no need for you to be so anxious!"

The difference between a painting of the fourth level and the painting of the fifth level was extremely huge, comparable to the gap between the Tongxuan and Zongshi realm.

Even though the Winter Plum Blossoms Painting that Zhang Xuan just created had reached the fourth level, luck seemed to have played a huge factor and even so, the painting appeared to have barely reached that level.

It is still a far way off from reaching the fifth level. To wish to sprint before you can even walk.... Aren't you being too anxious!

"Vice Guild Leader Wu is right. Being able to create a painting of this level at your age bears testimony to your incredible talent. In my years with the Painter Guild, you're already the most talented painter that I've seen. As for 3-star, it's better for you...."

Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng quickly chirped in as well. However, halfway through his words, he saw the youngster walk past him, and within a few steps, he was standing before the [Winter Plum Blossoms Painting].

There was a bowl of water, which appeared out of nowhere, in his hand. Taking a gulp, he sprayed the water out from his mouth, all of a sudden, onto the xuan paper.

Hualala!

The water droplets fell onto the painting, and gray spots appeared on the previously white portions, as though snow falling from the heavens. In an instant, it created an image of the plum blossoms standing proudly in the snow, contending against the heavens.

Weng!

Spiritual energy in the surroundings suddenly gathered around the painting, and the plum blossoms emerged from the surface of the xuan paper. Relentlessly, the flowers were trying to climb into the sky, as though trying to challenge the heavens and destiny.

"I'm done!"

Placing the bowl on the table, Zhang Xuan clapped his hands. Then, turning toward the two vice guild leaders, Zhang Xuan casually pointed to the painting.

"A painting of the fifth level...."

"Done!"

Chapter 292

Zhao Ya and the Others Arrive

"The winter plum blossoms are using spiritual energy from the surroundings to grow, is this.... a painting of the fifth level?"

"Just by spurting some water, it became a fifth level painting?"

"Does it have to be so exaggerated?"

The faces of everyone present distorted in shock as they became dumbfounded

It was merely a savage beast playfully running and rolling about on the paper, so they thought that the painting would be nothing at all. Yet, with a mere shake, it transformed into a third level painting.

And that wasn't the all. By heating the painting with a fire torch, it was immediately elevated to become a fourth level painting.... Then, with a spurt of water, it created the effect of snow, allowing the painting to reach the fifth level....

The heck!

Are you a painter.... or are you a street performer?

A fifth level painting is something that only a 3-star painter is capable of creating. Yet, to be able to reach that level with a savage beast....

What is this craziness?

Everyone turned to look at Zhang Xuan once more, and they couldn't help but doubt if he were human.

A moment ago, they thought that he was just an arrogant, boastful, and ignorant lad. But now, they realized how wrong they were. He was actually a grandmaster possessing skills beyond their imagination.

A painting that seemed to be scrap was forcefully raised to become a painting of the fifth level!

It was just like magic, leaving the crowd present thoroughly bewildered and dizzied.

"This.... This...."

The lips of the two vice guild leaders quivered in astonishment.

This is beyond incredible!

For a child who isn't even twenty to create a fifth level painting.... Even in the headquarter, he would be considered as one of the top geniuses!

More importantly, anyone else, even if it were a 3-star painter, would have to abstain from meat, meditate, and conduct several types of preparations to adjust their state of mind before they were able to create a painting of the fifth level. Yet, this fellow achieved this with just a spurt of water....

When did creating a fifth level painting become so simple?

"Did I actually challenge a fellow who is capable of creating fifth level paintings?"

Ji Mo gongzi's face paled, wishing to knock himself dead on a pillar at this instant.

After scolding the other party, the other party took out a savage beast to challenge his skills.

After mocking the other party's painting, the other party immediately brought the painting up to the third level with a shake.

After saying that the other party's work was a collaboration and that the result shouldn't be a draw, the other party immediately raised the level of the painting to the fourth level.

And now, it has been raised to the fifth level.

Are you here with the purpose to slap my face?

If I knew that you are a grandmaster capable of producing a fifth level painting, no

matter how foolish I may be, I wouldn't have dared to provoke you!

Now, my attempts to make my name known has made me a fool, and I have become a laughingstock. Needless to say flirting with ladies, I would be too embarrassed to walk in the streets....

"Give it a check, ascertain whether it is a fifth level painting!"

Ignoring the shock that the crowd was going through, Zhang Xuan turned to the two vice guild leaders.

"There's no need to check, it is definitely a fifth level painting!"

The two vice guild leaders were astonished beyond words.

A fifth level painting is capable of absorbing spiritual energy to materialize its own contents. Even though the painting didn't yet possess wisdom, it was capable of leaving the original dimension of the painting and creep outward. One didn't require a deep understanding of painting in order to identify a fifth level painting, only requiring that one not be blind....

As the vice guild leaders of the Painter Guild, 2-star pinnacle painters, how can they possibly be unable to tell a fifth level painting!

"Then.... Am I eligible to claim the 3-star painter emblem?" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

"This...."

Vice Guild leader Wu forcefully calmed down the agitation rippling within his mind, and after hesitating for a moment, spoke, "Going by logic, you are eligible as a 3-star painter. However, our guild leader is the only 3-star painter at our branch, and he is absent at the moment.... We don't have the qualifications to confer this rank upon you!"

"You don't have the qualifications?"

"Grandmaster Zhang, there's no need to panic...." Vice Guild Leader Wu waved his hands immediately to placate him.

His method of addressing Zhang Xuan had changed from 'brother' to 'grandmaster'.

Since the other party was able to create a painting of the fifth level, this showed that his skills had far surpassed theirs. Even though they were much older than him, they didn't dare to overstep their boundaries and call him 'brother'.

It would truly be indecorous for them to do so.

They would be disregarding order and hierarchy.

"As long as we send your painting to the headquarter and have someone to examine and verify it, the emblem should be issued soon." Vice Guild Leader Wu added. "This will take.... around ten days!"

"Ten days?"

"Yes. However, while we are unable to give you the 3-star emblem, for the time being, we can present you with the 2-star emblem on the spot!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu gestured, and an apprentice walked forward to receive instructions. Very quickly, an emblem with two shining and brilliant stars on it was brought out.

2-star painter emblem! It signifies one's identity as a 2-star painter.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan was delighted.

He didn't expect the painter examination to be so simple, that one is able to directly obtain a rank just by producing a piece of work. It is unlike the other occupations which conduct all kinds of troublesome tests in order to assess one's skills.

"Since Grandmaster Zhang has successfully produced a fifth level painting, even though you have not obtained the actual emblem, you already possess the authority of a 3-star painter!"

Vice Guild Leader Cheng Feng interjected.

"Can I already exercise the authority of a 3-star painter? Very well, this Painter Ji Mo has provoked me time and time again, and I hereby declare that he is permanently banned from the Painter Guild!"

Zhang Xuan turned to the crowd as he spoke.

Hearing those words, Ji Mo gongzi's face turned pale, and he collapsed to the ground.

The other party had become a 3-star painter, and he had gained the authority to issue bans. Once this ban was filed, all of the branches of the Painter Guild would receive the order, and he would be unable to enter any single one of them.

Any attempt to circumvent this ban would be taken as an act of provocation against the Painter Guild, and the offender could be killed on the spot!

Ji Mo thought that he use this countryside bumpkin as a stepping stone to make his name known. Never in his dreams did he expect to instead knock into a tough boulder, leaving himself with a smashed head....

"Painter Ji, you may leave now!"

Hearing Zhang Xuan's orders, Vice Guild Leader Wu shook his head, having no choice but to drive the other party away.

Even though he thought that it was a little too harsh, it was an irrefutable fact that Ji Mo had lost the competition, and thus, the wager. Hence, there was nothing more he could say about the situation.

Besides, in Zhang Xuan's presence, Ji Mo gongzi's talents amounted to nothing at all.

There was no need to think about whom they should support.

"Yes!"

Albeit reluctant, Ji Mo gongzi knew that the ban had been issued, and there was no point of reconciliation. Unless his skills surpassed that of the other party, he would never be able to overcome this ban.

Huala!

Rising to his feet, he turned around and walked out of the Painter Guild immediately.

He would only be embarrassing himself further by staying here!

"Damn it, damn it!"

Upon leaving the guild, he roared furiously to the skies, and killing intent shone in his eyes. "To dare to humiliate me like that, I'll never forgive you! Men!"

"Young master!"

A figure immediately appeared from the depths of the darkness.

"Investigate his background, find out who that fellow is, and if there is an opportunity.... kill him!"

He flung his hands grandly.

For him, a young master of one of the Three Great Clans in the capital, to be humiliated in public by a nobody, he felt an indescribable rage within him.

"Yes!"

The shadowy figure nodded and, with a slight blur, disappeared into the darkness once more.

....

"Where is your library?"

After obtaining the status of an official painter, Zhang Xuan didn't leave immediately. Instead, he inquired about the location of the library.

The painting books he browsed through in Master Lu Chen's house back then only covered the fundamentals. While it was sufficient to create lower level paintings, Zhang Xuan required more advanced books to improve.

Since he had already become an official painter and was at the Painter Guild, it would be beneficial for him to look through the books, and seek further improvements.

"Grandmaster Zhang, this way please!"

Vice Guild Leader Wu led the way.

In no time, the party arrived at a massive room.

"This is our library!" Vice Guild Leader Wu pointed inward.

Zhang Xuan nodded, "I'd like to take a look at the books, do not allow anyone to interrupt me!"

After which, he strolled in with his hands behind his back.

The collection in the Painter Guild was much larger than that in Master Lu Chen's house. An innumerable amount of books and art pieces of all sorts laid within the massive room.

Seeing that Vice Guild Leader Wu and the others didn't follow him in, Zhang Xuan took a deep breath, placing his finger on the first row, and then started on his job.

Swiftly, book after book was duplicated into the Library of Heaven's Path.

....

While Zhang Xuan was duplicating books in the Painter Guild, a huge aerial savage beast landed outside Tianwu Kingdom, and several figures leaped off its back.

"So, this is Tianwu Kingdom?"

A youngster stared at the towering city walls, his eyes glittering with excitement.

"That's right!"

Within the crowd, an elder stroked his beard and chuckled.

"We had to take a carriage to Beiwu Kingdom so as to borrow an aerial savage beast from the royal family to travel to Tianxuan Kingdom. Even though we didn't rest much throughout the journey, it took us a month to reach this place. Tianwu Kingdom is incredibly vast!"

A lady within the crowd smiled. The slight illumination from the stars and the moon added a mysterious allure to her beautiful face. Blinking her eyes twice, she asked, "Say, do you think that teacher has arrived yet?"

"I heard from Shen laoshi that Zhang laoshi would be heading straight for the Red Lotus Ridge right after leaving the Beast Hall. He probably has something to attend to

there, so I doubt that he has reached Tianwu Kingdom. However, there's no need for us to worry. He will surely come here to take the master teacher examination, so we'll just have to wait for him here!"

Another lady spoke up.

In contrast to the shy lady from before, this one exuded a valiant aura. Her facial features were unbelievably beautiful, it was as if she had come right out of a painting,

"Let's not waste our time here. We should proceed into the city!"

The elder from before interjected into the discussion. "I'm reminding all of you beforehand, Tianwu Kingdom is a Tier 1 Kingdom, unlike Tianxuan Kingdom. You have to behave cautiously so as to not offend any formidable figures by mistake. Although I can solve most problems through the Master Teacher Pavilion, it will be exceedingly troublesome. Thus, it'll be best to remain prudent!"

"Yes!" A few people answered harmoniously.

Seeing the group agreeing to his words, the elder nodded. "The sky has turned dark. We should enter the city and find a place to rest. Tomorrow morning, I will contact the Master Teacher Pavilion to check if Senior Zhang has arrived. Before Senior Zhang returns, you must have all broken through to Dingli realm, or else I would be too ashamed to meet him!"

"Liu shi, rest assured!"

Hearing his instructions, the group nodded immediately.

If Zhang Xuan was here, he would surely be able to recognize these figures as his five students, together with Liu shi, Lu Xun, Huang Yu, and a few others.

When Zhang Xuan left Hongtian Academy for the Beast Hall, this group had also headed for Beiwu Kingdom.

Riding on a carriage, it took them more than ten days to arrive at their destination.

Then, Liu shi borrowed an aerial savage beast from the Beiwu royal family, and only then did they manage to pick up speed.

However, this savage beast was unable to compare up to Zhang Xuan's Howling Firmament Beast, possessing only a Tongxuan realm cultivation. Thus, it took them a dozen more days to arrive here.

As such, it took them slightly over a month before they managed to arrive at Tianwu Royal City.

In this long period of time, Zhao Ya and the gang's cultivations had improved significantly.

The Library of Heaven's Path-modified secret manuals that Zhang Xuan left behind were top-notch and coupled with Liu shi's tutoring, it would not be an easy feat for them to not improve swiftly.

Right after the awakening of her unique constitution, Zhao Ya's cultivation had originally risen to Dingli realm pinnacle. At this moment, two faint bundles of light could be seen on her body surface, bearing testimony to the fact that she has already opened two acupoints to become a Pixue realm expert.

On the other hand, Zheng Yang and the others had also improved swiftly. They had reached Fighter 4-dan Pigu realm pinnacle, and they were only a single step away from reaching Dingli realm.

Of the group, the one with the weakest cultivation remained as Yuan Tao. But even so, he had already reached Pigu realm intermediate stage. On top of that, his defensive ability had grown greatly, to the point that Zhao Ya's offense was a mere itch to him. Even Pixue realm pinnacle experts would be unable to break through his defense. He had become a human shield in the truest sense.

Lu Xun, as Liu shi's apprentice, had also improved significantly under the latter's guidance. A month of training had allowed him to advance to Tongxuan realm primary stage.

Huang Yu had also successfully advanced from Dingli realm pinnacle to Pixue realm.

But of course, the one who underwent the greatest improvement was Liu shi.

The pointers which 'Yang shi' offered him back then in Tianxuan Kingdom allowed him to overcome the obstacle which had hindered him for many years, and he successfully became a Zongshi realm expert.

The magnificent energy in his body billowed mightily.

"Alright, let's enter!"

After paying the entrance fee, the group entered the capital.

Zhao Ya and the others were immediately captivated by the bustling city, and their eyes widened in thrill.

"We'll stay here!"

Walking through the streets, they soon spotted an inn in the distance. Liu shi led the group there and settled them in.

"Liu shi, on the way here, I noticed that the Painter Guild is in the vicinity. I would like to.... try taking the apprentice painter examination!"

Having made all necessary arrangements, Lu Xun walked over and looked at Liu shi expectantly.

"You will require a supporting occupation to become eligible for the master teacher examination in the future. Go on!"

Liu shi waved his hands casually.

"Yes!" Nodding his head, Lu Xun walked out of the inn.

Chapter 293

He is Called Zhang Xuan

Hu!

Exhaling deeply, Zhang Xuan rubbed between his eyebrows.

Even though there were many books in the Painter Guild, to Zhang Xuan, it just meant a slightly longer run. In less than an hour, he managed to duplicate all of the books in the library into the Library of Heaven's Path.

"Even though I am able to produce fifth level paintings, my understanding of the occupation is sorely lacking. Now that I possess these books to augment my knowledge, I should finally be able to live up to my identity as a 3-star painter!"

Looking at the neat rows of books in the Library of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan stretched his back lazily.

Even though he was able to create fifth level paintings through the painting techniques mentioned in Master Lu Chen's books, he didn't know much about the basic history of painting, the various styles, schools, and such.

Taking Duan Yu, for example, he was capable of executing the top-notch martial arts technique, Six Pulse Divine Sword, which allowed him to defeat the powerful Murong Fu. However, his fundamentals were extremely weak, and he didn't know any other basic techniques. If he were to face a group of hoodlums, he might not even be a match for them.

Zhang Xuan was in a similar circumstance. He was able to create a fifth level painting easily, but if one were to ask him to produce a Reality Depiction painting, he would find it very difficult to do so.

However, with the books from the Painter Guild library, it was no longer a problem.

Once Zhang Xuan read all of these books, his knowledge would far surpass that of 3-star painters, and perhaps, even 4-star painters.

"However.... I have countless books in the Library of Heaven's Path collected from Tianxuan Kingdom Book Collection Vault, the Beast Hall, Poison Hall, and Painter Guild.... There are several ten million of them in the library, and if I were to read them one by one, how long would it take for me to finish reading all of them?"

After gathering the books, another dilemma struck him, leaving him with a slight headache.

He had already duplicated over tens of million books since his time at Tianxuan Kingdom, and even though he had been reading whenever he found the time, accompanied by his fast speed at reading, he could only cover a maximum of one to two thousand books every day. In comparison to the huge collection consisting of tens of million of books.... The number of books he could read a day was just like a droplet of water in an ocean.

Furthermore, as he goes further and deeper into each occupation, the amount of books he would have to read would only increase. Without several years of effort, it would be impossible for him to convert all of them into his own knowledge.

"If only I have the golden page...."

Zhang Xuan thought.

The golden page was something that was formed by the Book of Heaven's Path.

It could instantly assimilate all of the knowledge contained within the library into his own mind. If he obtains the golden page, he would be able to easily remember everything contained in the library, and he wouldn't have exhausted himself flipping through the books one by one.

"I thought that it is formed only when someone is grateful to me, but thinking about it now, that shouldn't be the case! When I was passing off as Yang shi, there were many people who were grateful to me, but the golden page didn't form. This means that there is more to it!"

Thinking of the golden page in the Book of Heaven's Path, Zhang Xuan tried to recall the scenario in which it appeared.

He had no idea when the first golden page appeared, but the second golden page appeared when Zhao Ya and the others challenged Lu Xun on the dueling platform in

order to defend his honor.

Back then, their gratitude carried the purest and most earnest of emotions between teacher and student.

Can it be that.... only strong feelings of gratitude between the teacher and his students can make the golden page appear?

As Yang shi, most of the people he helped felt deference to him instead of such feelings.

"I can give it a try!"

Thinking of this, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

While other people might find it impossible to verify such matters, Zhang Xuan had a method up his sleeves.

Casually taking out an empty book from his storage ring, he wrote his conjecture in a book before touching it lightly.

Weng!

With a jolt, an identical book appeared in the Library of Heaven's Path.

Zhang Xuan flipped it open casually.

"It is really the earnest gratitude between the teacher and student that forms the golden page....! To think this would be the case!"

Upon seeing the results of his conjecture, Zhang Xuan felt agitated.

If he knew that this golden page was formed like that, he wouldn't have exhausted himself reading along the entire journey. He put in so much effort but had only managed to read a small portion of the entire sea of books.

"Looks like I should accept a few students and think of a way.... to make them feel grateful to me!"

Zhang Xuan smiled gently.

Once the golden page was formed, he would be able to easily convert those knowledge into his own.

Right now, what he lacked was an accumulation of knowledge.

Only with sufficient knowledge can he easily identify flaws and solve problems without utilizing the Library of Heaven's Path.

"I wonder if Zhao Ya and the others have arrived. Seems like my only choice is to make an inquiry at the Master Teacher Pavilion tomorrow. Since I'm free now, maybe I should walk around to see if there's anyone I can guide. Perhaps, I might even find myself a student...."

Thinking so, Zhang Xuan stepped out of the Painter Guild library.

As he was leaving the library, he met the two vice guild leaders and after a short chat, he stepped, out of the guild, onto the streets once more.

Time is precious, so it was imperative for Zhang Xuan to identify a way to form the golden page.

The moment he stepped out of the guild, another young man walked in from another direction.

He was Lu Xun, who had just arrived at Tianwu Royal City.

The [Tianwu Inn] which they settled in was just a few hundred meters away from the Painter Guild, and he rushed here as soon as Liu shi finished making arrangements.

"To take the master teacher examination, one must have a supporting occupation. I have learned painting from my father from young, and I've long been able to produce paintings of the Reality Depiction level. I should first settle the apprentice painter examination before thinking of a way to become an official painter!"

Witnessing the large and majestic calligraphy at the entrance of the Painter Guild, Lu Xun felt agitated.

With his current skills, it would be difficult for him to qualify as an official painter. However, becoming an apprentice painter shouldn't be much of a challenge.

Upon stepping into the guild, he saw paintings after paintings hung on the walls. There were mountains, streams, canaries, spring, the radiant sun.... And to his astonishment, all of them had attained the level of Reality Depiction. With a single gaze, he could tell that the painters behind those works possessed an understanding of painting that was in no way inferior to his.

"As expected of the Painter Guild, impressive...."

Lu Xun couldn't help but comment with glowing eyes.

Because this branch didn't have a long history, even Master Lu Chen hadn't been here to visit, so Lu Xun naturally wasn't aware of what was within. He hadn't expected to be able to see so many incredible art pieces the moment he enters and was impressed by the sight before him.

"Gongzi, may I know what kind of painting you are looking for? I can bring you around the guild!"

Right after he entered, the green-robed attendant who served Zhang Xuan previously walked up to him with a respectful attitude.

"I'm not here to buy a painting.... I am here to take the apprentice painter examination! May I know where the examination held would be held?" Lu Xun smiled.

"Are you here to take the apprentice painter examination?"

The green-robed attendant was taken aback.

Usually, examinees appear only once every several months. What is going on today? Why have they appeared in a whole group today?

Right after Ji Mo gongzi's assessment, Grandmaster Zhang appeared. And right after Grandmaster Zhang left, this fellow came to take the apprentice painter examination....

It sure is lively today!

"This way please!"

Even though he was bewildered by the situation, he didn't dare to keep Lu Xun waiting.

After all, he was just an attendant of the guild, while an apprentice is someone who has a chance to become an official painter in the future. There was a huge gap in status between the two.

"Un!" Lu Xun followed behind him.

"Impressive, this is really a fifth level painting!"

"Indeed, to think that he would be capable of painting a fifth level work in his first examination, and moreover, below the age of twenty! He is such a genius!"

"Even Ji Mo gongzi fell in defeat before him and was chased out of the guild. His talents are indeed impressive!"

"My head is still whirling from the situation just now. That is truly the most exciting competition I've ever seen!"

"I didn't think that a savage beast would be capable of painting as well. This is something which I've never dared to even think about in the past...."

....

Making his way in the spacious hall, discussions in hushed voices echoed from all directions.

Even though there were many of Ji Mo gongzi's fans within the crowd during the competition an hour ago, there were also plenty of noblemen and aristocrats who were truly passionate about painting.

It was Grandmaster Zhang's first appearance here, and he had already left the entire guild amazed.

"They say that.... someone was able to produce a fifth level painting in his first attempt at the examination. What is that about?"

With the discussions around him heating up, Lu Xun could no longer hold back his curiosity and asked the green-robed attendant.

"Oh, they're talking about the competition that concluded just a moment ago!" The attendant's eyes glowed with excitement when he heard the question.

Not only was he able to watch the proceedings of the competition clearly from right beside, he was the one to attend to the grandmaster, and he felt greatly honored.

"Competition?"

"That's right. It happened just a few moments ago...." The green-robed attendant soon recounted the events vividly to Lu Xun.

"You say that.... the grandmaster dipped the savage beast in ink, allowed it to walk on the xuan paper, and with just a shake, turned the painting into a third level art piece?"

Lu Xun widened his eyes in disbelief.

Having studied painting under his father since young, he understood the difficulty in producing a third level painting.

Even his father couldn't guarantee to be able to produce a third level painting every single time he paints. Yet, this grandmaster is able to create such a painting using the random footsteps of a savage beast and a casual shake.... Are you trying to exaggerate things?

However, the true shock was laying in wait.

"By heating the painting with a fire torch.... it turned into a fourth level painting?"

"With a mouthful of water, it became a fifth level masterpiece?"

The more he heard, the more he found his mind unable to cope. He was on the verge of entering a frenzy.

Why does it sound like fiction?

If it is true, then that grandmaster's control over his painting is way too fearsome!

"It's all true! I attended to the grandmaster myself, and I witnessed the proceedings of the competition personally. I can't be wrong!"

Seeing the disbelief in the other party's eyes, the green-robed attendant declared proudly.

"That's amazing.... If I can become a student of this grandmaster, my painting mastery will definitely soar rapidly, and it won't be long before I become an official painter!"

Seeing how the other party was so certain of himself, a thought appeared in Lu Xun's mind and it soon grew to the point that it could no longer be contained.

One of the prerequisites to the master teacher examination is to become an official member of another occupation.

Even though Lu Xun had been studying painting from young, he knew that there was a world of a difference between Reality Depiction and Spiritual Canvas. If he studied all by his own, he could possibly take decades to reach the next level.

However.... With the guidance of an incredible teacher, this process could be greatly shortened.

He didn't know about other grandmasters, but the one which the attendant just spoke of amazed him greatly.

To be capable of elevating the level of a painting so easily, especially to the fifth level, the grandmaster's comprehension of painting must be unimaginably profound!

If he were to come under the grandmaster's tutelage, he would be able to clear all the doubts he had immediately, and his path as a painter would become much more smooth-sailing.

"What is the name of that grandmaster? Do you know where he is? Is he accepting any students?"

Arriving at this conclusion, Lu Xun could not help but ask, his face reddened with agitation.

"That grandmaster.... If I'm not wrong, his name is.... Zhang Xuan!" The green-robed attendant pondered for a moment before replying.

"Zhang Xuan?"

Lu Xun's eyes widened immediately.

Duan Yu: Reference to Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils

He is known for being capable of utilizing the ultimate art, Six Meridians Divine Sword. However, he only managed to learn this technique due to a series of coincidences, and due to his lacking fundamentals, he was unable to execute the technique every single time, which posed as a fatal flaw. He managed to defeat powerful antagonists like Murong Fu but often lost to minor and weaker characters.

Chapter 294

Sneak Attack

Can it be that this person is.... Uncle Zhang?

Lu Xun's body swayed, and an urge to vomit blood welled up within him.

From the moment he challenged him in Tianxuan Kingdom, he had been suffering blow after blow. He thought that now that he had come to Tianwu Kingdom, he would be able to walk out from the other party's shadow and make a name for himself. Yet, the moment he arrived, he suffered yet another blow.

Are you my nemesis?

Why must you appear wherever I go, just like a vengeful spirit? More importantly.... to always hog the limelight....

Holding back his dismay, Lu Xun asked, "How does this Grandmaster Zhang look like?"

"He's around my height, slightly thin, having fair and smooth skin...." The green-robed attendant pondered for a moment before describing Zhang Xuan's physical traits.

Halfway through, Lu Xun could already tell that it was definitely Zhang Xuan.

"Forget it, I'm already used to suffering these blows on my confidence...."

Ascertaining that it was the person he was thinking of, even though Lu Xun felt gloomy, he heaved a sigh of relief.

This monster wasn't just incredible, the students he taught were the same. Competing with him would just frustrate him and shorten his lifespan. Lu Xun had thought this matter through on the way here and had decided to just accept his lot.

Initially, when he heard about the legendary affairs of this grandmaster, he thought that there were monsters like Zhang Xuan in Tianwu Kingdom.

But since they were the same person, at the very least, it was proof that Zhang Xuan was the anomaly. Otherwise, if everyone were like him, Lu Xun wouldn't stand a chance at all.

"I should first take the apprentice painter examination. After I'm done, I'll inform teacher, Zheng Yang, and the others about it. They'll probably be delighted at the news!"

Adjusting his state of mind, Lu Xun decided not to dwell on this matter and, under the lead of the green-robed attendant, entered the examination hall.

....

Zhang Xuan was oblivious to the fact that Lu Xun had entered the Painter Guild right after his departure. At this moment, he was strolling casually on the streets.

In order to form the golden page, he must find students and win their earnest gratitude.

But where can Zhang Xuan find a student?

He couldn't possibly grab a random passerby and demand the person to acknowledge him as his teacher, right? If he did so, he would probably be pummeled to death on the spot.

"Tianwu Academy!"

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up all of a sudden.

He would definitely be pummeled to death if he were to grab random passer-bys and plead with them to become his student, but.... in an academy, the situation was completely different.

The reason why students join an academy is to seek knowledge, and they offer their unconditional trust to its teachers.

It was feasible for Zhang Xuan to impersonate a teacher. As long as he is able to find a suitable student, it wouldn't be difficult to make him feel grateful.

Furthermore, he had heard that the best academy in Tianwu Kingdom is in the capital

when he first entered the city.

"Not a bad idea, I shall head over now!"

Thus, he made up his mind to ask around for directions to this academy. However, at this moment, he noticed something strange and his eyebrows shot up.

"Someone is following me!"

He is currently a Half-Zongshi expert, and even without utilizing the Library of Heaven's Path, he is able to sense the hostility in others. Despite the dense crowd, he could clearly sense a faint but malicious intent in the air.

Even though this intent was carefully concealed to the point that any other Zongshi realm experts would find it hard to detect, Zhang Xuan, who had reached a Soul Depth of 5.0, was still able to discern it easily.

"Could it be that Ji Mo gongzi?"

He had just arrived at Tianwu Kingdom and didn't know anyone. The only enemy he had made was Ji Mo, whom he had just taught a lesson. He didn't expect the other party to send someone after him so quickly.

He glanced over casually using his peripheral vision.

There was a total of five people, and they were all at Tongxuan realm. Two of them had even achieved Tongxuan realm pinnacle.

It seemed that Ji Mo gongzi was unaware of his actual cultivation realm, thus he thought that sending these few people would be sufficient to deal with him.

After all, painters are different from the other occupations of the Upper Nine Paths.

A prerequisite for beast tamers and apothecaries to attain a promotion to 2-star is to possess Zongshi realm cultivation and to reach 3-star, they have to possess a Zhizun realm cultivation.

On the other hand, one's cultivation realm is irrelevant to his status as an official painter. Regardless of whether he is at Tongxuan realm or Pixue realm, as long as one has reached a level of enlightenment and is capable of painting a fifth level work, he

would be eligible to become a 3-star painter.

That being said, those who are capable of produce a fifth level painting tend to have a rich experience in life, most of them already in their seventies and eighties. In addition, given the huge amount of money they could earn from each of their painting, they wouldn't lack resources. Thus, even if they weren't able to reach Zhizun realm, they would be at minimum Zongshi realm pinnacle. Thus, on the whole, there wasn't too large of a difference between painters and the other occupation.

It was extremely rare for a quirk such as Zhang Xuan to appear. To paint a fifth level painting before the age of twenty, he had already broken all of these underlying assumptions.

Back in the Painter Guild, he didn't display his strength, and the Heaven's Path zhenqi allowed him to conceal his cultivation realm perfectly. Thus, no one was able to tell how high his cultivation realm was. However, based on his age, it was unlikely for him to exceed Pixue realm. Thus, Ji Mo gongzi thought that these few experts would be more than enough to give him a punishment.

"There are too many people here. I should look for somewhere remote to play with them!"

Zhang Xuan chuckled.

Since his transcension, even though he has been trying his best to raise his cultivation all along, he didn't have much of a chance to try out his moves, and his fists had been itching for an opponent. Since these fellows were here to cause him trouble, he could make use of them to test his techniques.

Acting as if he didn't notice the other party, he glanced around to look for a remote alley. To his frustration, he realized that Tianwu Kingdom was way too prosperous. Given that the sun had just set not too long ago, the streets were still filled with crowds, so he was unable to find any suitable locations.

"Time to go out of the city then!"

Besides, he was on the outskirts of the city and wasn't too far from the city gates. Thus, he began walking with widened strides.

"Why is this fellow heading out of the city?"

The group of pursuers, upon seeing Zhang Xuan stride past the city gates, became dumbfounded.

There were too many people in the city, and if a conflict occurs, it was highly probable that it would blow out of proportions. Just as they were in a dilemma about how they could bring this fellow to an isolated location, this fellow took the initiative to leave the city, all by himself.

Isn't he acting too obediently!

"Who cares, he's just a young lad. Don't tell me that you're scared of him?"

"That's true. Even if he were to have started cultivating even from inside his mother's womb, he can only have attained Tongxuan realm at best. It is impossible for us to lose!"

The few men hesitated for a moment before nodding simultaneously.

Even though the environment and resources for cultivation in Tianwu Kingdom were much better than that of Tianxuan Kingdom, a Tongxuan realm cultivator could already be considered an expert.

Given that not one but five such experts were at once sent to deal with an insignificant young lad, it was no wonder why they were so confident.

"I shall remind all of you once more, the young master has instructed us not to kill that fellow. No matter what, he's a 3-star painter. If he were to die, the Painter Guild headquarter would definitely look into the matter, and this would bring the young master a lot of trouble! What we'll do is to humiliate him. I trust that you know what you should do!"

A Tongxuan realm expert, who appeared to be the leader of the group, instructed the others in a suppressed voice.

"Rest assured, we know what to do!"

The others nodded simultaneously.

Because of his status as a 3-star painter, the Painter Guild headquarter would definitely send someone to investigate if he were to go missing.

Even though the Ji Clan was one of the Three Great Clans of Tianwu Royal City, it was impossible for them to withstand the Painter Guild's rage.

Thus, Ji Mo gongzi had already instructed the group that instead of killing Zhang Xuan, they were to humiliate Zhang Xuan and allow him to comprehend the meaning of a fate worse than death.

....

Tailing behind Zhang Xuan, it didn't take long for the group to leave the city. After walking for a distance, they soon arrived at a remote forest.

"Be careful, I think that lad has already noticed us, and he brought us here by intention...."

The leader said with a hushed voice.

"What do we have to fear? This is just what we wanted, we can let loose and teach him a lesson here!"

The rest of the group was unsuspecting.

From their perspective, Zhang Xuan was simply courting death.

Despite knowing that there are people on his tail, he dared to come to such a secluded place. Isn't it obvious that he is tired of living?

Huala!

Drawing their weapons simultaneously, the few of them entered the forest.

They were wondering if the fellow would conceal himself and wait secretly for them, when they suddenly caught sight of him lying openly on a tree branch, looking at them with a bright grin.

"Did Ji Mo send all of you here?"

Since there was no one here, Zhang Xuan couldn't be bothered to beat around the bush. To him, they were just a few small fries.

"Move!"

Not expecting the young lad to face them so fearlessly, the leader harrumphed coldly and gestured.

"I'll do it!"

The weakest of the group, a Tongxuan realm intermediate stage cultivator, chuckled. Pushing forcefully against the ground, he leaped straight at Zhang Xuan with amazing speed.

Hualala!

The human was airborne, the powerful zhenqi that he exuded causing the surrounding flora and fauna to bow before his presence, and sent sonic waves into the surroundings.

"This battle technique is not bad. Judging from his wholesome aura and the might of his leap, it seems that Zhang Qing isn't too far off from reaching Tongxuan realm advanced stage!"

The leader nodded. At the same time, he bellowed, "Control your strength, do not kill him...."

"Don't worry, I know what I am doing...."

Zhang Qing replied. He was still considering how much strength he should put into his fist when the vision before him blurred all of a sudden.

Pah!

With a crisp sound, a slap struck his face, and an excruciating pain assaulted his cheeks. Before Zhang Qing could react, his entire body had twisted like a fried dough twist, and he flew several dozen meters away. Coughing up mouthfuls and mouthfuls of blood, a few of his teeth could be seen on the ground amidst red liquid.

"Ah?"

"What?"

Initially, they thought that Zhang Qing would be able to subdue the young lad easily. Yet, contrary to their expectations, he was sent flying with a single slap. The sight left the leader and the three remaining members stunned with astonishment.

"I'm sorry. I've been cultivating by myself, and I haven't really fought with anyone. Thus, I accidentally put too much strength into my slap!"

Zhang Xuan scratched his head.

Ever since he transcended into this world, he hadn't fought with anyone. Thus, he wasn't able to accurately gauge how much strength his slap would wield. He thought that it was just a gentle hit, and at the very most, the other party would just feel a slight sting, but.... Upon seeing how the other party was already on the verge of death, Zhang Xuan apologized immediately and sheepishly.

"This fellow isn't as simple as we thought him out to be. Everyone, use your full strength!"

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was capable of exerting such great might easily, the leader's face turned pale immediately.

Initially, he thought that the young master was making too big a deal out of nothing to send so many of them just to deal with an insignificant fellow. Nevertheless, they obeyed his order since it was just a simple mission.

However, upon witnessing this situation, they realized that.... it wasn't as they thought.

That young lad was definitely stronger than them.

Possessing a strength exceeding Tongxuan realm pinnacle under the age of twenty?

Probably only the number one genius Mo Hongyi is capable of rivaling him!

Huala!

The others weren't fools either. With a single glance, they recognized that the fellow was much stronger than they had expected. They held their swords tightly as they surrounded Zhang Xuan, each of them with a grim expression on their face.

Of the four, two were Tongxuan realm advanced stage and the rest were Tongxuan

realm pinnacle. With their strength united, they exerted an imposing might, and the atmosphere seemed to have grown heavy all of a sudden.

"Go!"

Knowing that the other party was strong, the leader didn't hesitate and immediately ordered everyone to charge forward, in order to claim the initiative.

Hualalala!

Four weapons stabbed out at the simultaneously.

All four of them were guards of the Ji Clan, and they had been living together for more than five years, so they possessed great teamwork. Driving their zhenqi, they struck at the same time with amazing speed, and their swords were aimed at each of Zhang Xuan's top, middle, and bottom, sealing all possible escape routes.

With their outstanding coordination, coupled with powerful battle techniques, it would be difficult for even a Half-Zongshi to deal with them.

However, Zhang Xuan wasn't an ordinary Half-Zongshi but could be considered an unparalleled genius.

The four of them thought that they would be able to land at least a single strike on the young lad, but the moment they sent their swords out, they suddenly felt an emptiness in their palms.

Looking downward, they realized that their ferocious assault had been completely neutralized, the swords in their hands were already in the other party's grasp unknowingly.

"Ah!"

The entire group was alarmed and they shrieked in fear.

The heck!

This is too frightening!

To be able to steal their swords with bare hands, it was no longer just a problem of the

difference in their cultivation.

The other party had to have a complete understanding of their battle techniques, strengths, their movements, and the position of their swords to be capable of achieving this feat.

With a single error, it could mean the loss of his fingers!

Even a Zongshi realm pinnacle expert.... would be incapable of doing so!

They thought that it would be a walk in the park to teach this young fellow a lesson. Yet, it turned out that what they were dealing with was a.... ferocious tiger!

"Retreat!"

Narrowing his eyes, the leader knew they would die if they continued to remain here. Thus, after yelling out a command, he turned around to escape immediately.

Without any hesitation, the other three turned to flee as fast as they could as well.

They had no choice but to ignore the convulsing fellow on the floor who was sent flying by Zhang Xuan with a slap.

"We haven't even done anything, why are you in such a hurry?"

They had yet to cross any blows, yet these fellows were already escaping. Speechless, Zhang Xuan beckoned.

Hu!

Before the four could react, the view before them turned pitch black. A massive figure descended from the sky.

Padah!

As though they were struck by a small mountain, the four of them were blasted like a cannon ball. The sight before them blurred, and they spurted large mouthfuls of blood.

"It.... is a Half-Zhizun realm savage beast...."

It took them much difficulty before they could recover from their stupor. Squinting at the massive fellow, they nearly lost their minds.

To think that it would be a....

Half-Zhizun realm savage beast!

Only the old ancestor of the Tianwu Kingdom would possess the strength of a Half-Zhizun! This beast can already be considered the most lethal weapon in Tianwu Kingdom! To think that the other party would possess such a tamed beast....

What kind of monster did they exactly provoke?

The Howling Firmament Beast had been roaming around the forests and, upon hearing Zhang Xuan's commands, rushed over immediately.

In its eyes, these few fellows were mere ants. If it hadn't held back, these fellows would have been easily reduced to meat paste.

After knocking the four away, before they could even land on the floor, the Howling Firmament Beast's massive body shook once more. It dashed forward and struck them with its wing.

Padah! Padah! Padah! Padah!

Four consecutive thuds sounded loudly in the silent forest. As they fell limply to the ground, fresh blood gushed from their mouths. Most of their bones seemed to have been fractured from the impact.

The Howling Firmament Beast had a Half-Zhizun realm cultivation and, not to mention, savage beasts tend to be significantly stronger than cultivators with the same cultivation realm. With just a few light sweeps, it nearly shattered half of all the bones in their bodies and dissipated their zhenqi. Even with treatment, it was likely that they would remain crippled for life.

"I told you to go easy on them, didn't I? I still have questions to ask them. How in the world can I interrogate them when you have reduced them to such a state?"

Seeing how the Howling Firmament Beast had crippled the four of them, Zhang Xuan frowned.

It would have been better if they did not hear him. Upon catching those words, the four of them twitched, and tears nearly spilled from their eyes.

Brother, how can you be so thick-skinned as to criticize your savage beast? You were the one who attacked Zhang Qing, and his state seems to be worse than ours. Until now, he is still puking blood, and his entire face has distorted under your slap. Even his mother wouldn't be able to recognize him now!

If he isn't given treatment soon, losing his cultivation would be a small matter, he might not even survive tonight....

Dealing such cruel blows yourself, how do you have the skin to criticize others?

Wuuuu....

Who in the world told us that this would be a simple mission!

Young master, come here! We promise that we won't beat you to death....

Chapter 295

Acknowledge Me As Your Teacher

"Speak, is it Ji Mo who sent you here?"

After reprimanding the Howling Firmament Beast, Zhang Xuan turned to the leader of the group.

Even though they were stubborn at the start, upon being forced to consume poison by Zhang Xuan, they realized immediately that the person before them wasn't just a simple painter and cultivator. He was a poison master as well!

Recalling the stories about poison masters that they heard of, the final line of defense in their minds crumbled. They disclosed everything that they knew.

"Ji Mo gongzi told you not to kill me, but to strip me, hang me on the tree, and then record this down using a Record Crystal?"

Hearing the other party's motive, Zhang Xuan became speechless.

However, after giving the matter some thought, Zhang Xuan realized why the other party would want to do so.

Zhang Xuan had become a 3-star painter, and if he were to be humiliated, he would probably keep silent for fear of embarrassing himself.

On the other hand, if he were to be killed, the Painter Guild would definitely pursue the matter. Given that he had a recent dispute with Ji Mo, the latter would become the prime suspect. That would put the Ji Mo at risk of facing the Painter guild's punishment.

If it were just a 1-star or 2-star painter, the headquarter might not even be bothered to interfere. However, if a genius who managed to reach the level of a 3-star painter before twenty were to be killed, it was possible that they would destroy the Ji Clan out of rage.

On the other hand, if they were to humiliate Zhang Xuan and use the Record Crystal to tape down his shameful demeanor, Ji Mo would gain a weapon against him. Even when he eventually discovers the culprit, in order to prevent the video from getting out, Zhang Xuan wouldn't dare to confront the Ji Clan.

It must be said that even though Ji Mo gongzi appeared to be a rash person, he had actually planned out the matter carefully in consideration of the consequences.

However, it was a pity that he had underestimated Zhang Xuan's cultivation, causing the five of them to land in such a pitiful state.

Upon uncovering the other party's motive, Zhang Xuan glanced to the five and gave each of them another kick.

"The poison that I fed you will act up within five days and it will corrode your organs, making you die in agony. Regardless of how you do it, strip Ji Mo gongzi naked, hang him up on a tree and record a video using a Record Crystal. In return, I will give you the antidote to your poison. You don't have to dream about finding any other poison masters to treat you. The poison that I introduced into your body is my own secret concoction, even a 3-star poison master would be helpless before it!"

An eye for an eye.

Weren't you trying to embarrass me?

Fine, I'll have these subordinates of yours give you a dose of your own medicine. Let's see what happens.

As for the secret poison concoction that Zhang Xuan used, it was actually just Heaven's Path zhenqi. However, it was true that no one could remove it except for him. With a single thought, Zhang Xuan would be able to detonate the zhenqi, already hidden deep inside their acupoints, causing them to die on the spot.

Thus, he wasn't lying.

"Yes, yes!"

Upon hearing about the poison that was planted in their bodies, their lips quivered in fear.

Poison masters were a feared throughout the continent, their methods sinister and terrifying. Offending any of them spelled certain doom.

If only they knew that the person whom their young master sent them after was such a terrifying figure, they would have disobeyed his order and escaped from the city. They had never thought of rushing to their dooms just like that.

"Scram!"

After instructing them, Zhang Xuan sent them away.

"Yes!"

Supporting each other, the five of them struggled to their feet and left the forest in a haste.

The moment they returned back to the city, they glanced at one another with uncertainty.

"What should we do?"

The severely injured Zhang Qing asked the others in a feeble voice.

"What else can we do? We can only obey his commands. At worse.... we'll just leave Tianwu Kingdom after that, never to return!" The leader gritted his teeth.

They were all mercenaries who worked for the Ji Clan in return for money and resources. Now that their lives were threatened, it was clear what was the most important.

Besides, if not for Ji Mo gongzi's willful nature, he wouldn't have offended such a formidable character, which eventually landed them in such a tragic state.

Their hatred for this young master fella had long permeated their bones.

"We should discuss this matter carefully to see how we can accomplish his mission within five days...."

Having decided their next course of action, the five men pledged their brotherhood, before limping to find a suitable resting spot to treat their injuries.

....

Ignoring the crippled five, just as Zhang Xuan was just about to return to the city to look for Tianwu Kingdom, he heard a ruckus in the mountain not too far away. There seemed to be a battle going on.

"I should go and take a look!"

Zhang Xuan leaped onto the back of the Howling Firmament Beast, and with a strong gust of wind, the savage beast soared into the skies and, under the cover of darkness, crept toward the source of the noise.

....

Tianwu Inn.

"Are you saying that.... teacher took the painter examination just moments ago?"

Zhao Ya and the others stared at Lu Xun, their faces red with agitation.

They had thought that their teacher would require another period of time before he could arrive at the kingdom. To think that he would get here earlier than them!

"I heard that from the personnel of the Painter Guild that a person named Zhang Xuan had passed the examination to become a 3-star painter. As for whether he is.... senior uncle, I'm not too certain!"

Lu Xun said.

After he passed the apprentice painter examination, he rushed back to the inn immediately to inform the group about the news he had.

"It must be him! For two people to possess the same name and, at the same time, be capable of painting a fifth level art piece, is such coincidence even possible?" Huang Yu said.

She had personally witnessed Zhang Xuan painting, and not only were his painting skills formidable, his speed was one to behold. She didn't think that it was impossible for him to use a savage beast to produce a fifth level painting.

"Since teacher took the painter examination less than two hours ago, he should still be nearby. Let's search around, perhaps we may be able to find him!"

"I agree, I want to look for teacher as well!"

Hearing that their teacher was in the vicinity, Zhao Ya and the others couldn't remain seated.

"Alright, let's check the area and meet back here in four hours then!"

Understanding their feelings, Liu Shi found it hard to reject them. Thus, he issued his instruction.

"Alright!"

Unable to remain still any further, Zhao Ya and the others dashed out upon hearing the elder's command.

....

Hong hong hong!

Zhenqi filled the air and shock waves ravaged the surroundings.

A human and a beast was engaged in an intense battle.

"A Zongshi realm cultivator against a Zongshi realm savage beast?"

Standing on the back of the Howling Firmament Beast, Zhang Xuan observed the battle from above and felt somewhat astonished.

A Zongshi realm pinnacle cultivator was actually battling a Zongshi realm advanced stage Crimson Tiger.

The Crimson Tiger's physique greatly resembled the Gold Alloyed Panther that Zhang Xuan tamed previously. Not only did it possess tough fur and skin, it also wielded tremendous strength in its compact body.

This Crimson Tiger was clearly much stronger than the Gold Alloyed Panther. Every single claw and kick seemed to rip air apart.

Under the devastating force from both human and beast, trees were torn into pieces while boulders were smashed into fragments.

Even though the Crimson Tiger was only at Zongshi realm advanced stage, it's physical advantages allowed it to match up against cultivators stronger than it. The Zongshi realm pinnacle seemed to possess multiple incredible methods, but he was unable to overcome the Crimson Tiger's defense. In a mere few moments, they had already crossed blows numerous times, but none of them was able to get the better of the other.

Peng peng peng peng!

After a few more blows, upon realizing that there would be no conclusion to this battle, the Crimson Tiger shook its thick tail, turned around, and left.

Seeing it disappear into the distance, the Zongshi realm pinnacle cultivator heaved a sigh of relief. Just as he was about to leave, his eyes narrowed suddenly, and he lifted his head to look at the Howling Firmament Beast which was airborne.

It was already late into the night, but the Howling Firmament Beast wasn't flying too far off the surface and was visible to the naked eye. Back then, the cultivator's attention had been completely taken by the battle with the Crimson Tiger, so he failed to notice its presence. However, now that the battle had ended, if he still were to be unable to notice that powerful presence lingering above him, he should really jump off a building.

"May I know which elder it is? I hope to seek your understanding for being unable to welcome you!"

The cultivator clasped his fist respectfully and in a hurry.

Since the other party was able to tame a Half-Zhizun savage beast, he was probably a Zhizun realm expert. Even though he possessed a Zongshi realm pinnacle cultivation, he didn't dare to act impertinently before the other party.

"Elder?"

Right after the battle, Zhang Xuan was about to leave when he was noticed by the cultivator below. Hearing his words, a thought suddenly surfaced in his mind.

"That's right, I am looking for a student to make him feel grateful toward me! Since this fellow thinks of me as his elder, I can make use of this opportunity to hoodwink him. Perhaps, this might work out!"

Zhang Xuan was getting frustrated over where he could find a student when this fellow appeared out of nowhere. Thus, he decided to give it a try.

"However, my current appearance is too young. He will definitely question my abilities if he sees my face.... I should assume Yang Shi's appearance!"

Thus, making use of his disguise ability, Zhang Xuan's bones and muscles shifted to model: 'Yang Xuan'.

In any way, he was on the Howling Firmament Beast, and it was late at night. Even though the other party had noticed his presence, he was unable to see his appearance clearly.

Hu!

Upon command, the Howling Firmament Beast slowly descended to the ground.

Landing on the ground surface, Zhang Xuan could see that the Zongshi realm pinnacle cultivator was a spirited, middle-aged man dressed in tight clothes.

With prior experience from passing off as Yang Xuan, Zhang Xuan was able to get into character easily. Standing atop the Firmament Howling Beast, Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back, and then with a completely calm expression, he replied, "There's no need to worry, I am just passing by this area. I happened to see you battling with the Crimson Tiger, so I stopped for a moment to observe the fight. Are you trying to tame it?"

There were many ways to tame savage beasts, and pleasing them was just one method. Battling them was another.

Even though the beast and the human had fought ferociously, if they were to truly get serious, they should have been bleeding by now. Given that this middle-aged cultivator allowed the Crimson Tiger to leave freely, it was highly probable that he was trying to tame it.

Furthermore, judging from their battle, they seemed to have some understanding of

each other's techniques. It was most likely that that wasn't the first battle between them.

"You're right, elder. I do intend to tame it."

The middle-aged man clasped his fist in response.

He had tried to examine the other party, but he realized that he wasn't able to detect any signs of his cultivation at all. To be capable of this feat, the other party's zhenqi must either be purer than his or.... that his cultivation far surpassed his!

Given that the other party possessed a Half-Zhizun Howling Firmament Beast as a tamed beast, and that he was unable to see through his cultivation, the elder before him was at minimum a Zhizun realm expert!

Coming to this conclusion, the middle-aged cultivator's attitude grew even more respectful.

"The Crimson Tiger is the king of the forest, and taming it is no easy task. It is impossible to do so through a few mere battles!" Zhang Xuan spoke casually.

Even though Zhang Xuan might not have heard of rarer savage beasts just as the Lava Beast, as a 2-star beast tamer, he nevertheless knew quite a bit about the Crimson Tiger.

The Crimson Tiger is the king of the forest, and upon maturity, it would possess the strength of a Zongshi realm pinnacle. Given that this Crimson Tiger was only at Zongshi realm advanced stage, it had yet to reach maturity.

Such savage beasts, who are powerful from birth, rarely submit to anyone. The chances of taming it with just a few fights is extremely low.

"I understand that as well, but.... I can't help my greed!"

The middle-aged man flashed a bitter smile.

He knew that it was too difficult to tame this Crimson Tiger. However, when he thought about the benefits taming it could bring him, he found himself unable to suppress his desire.

"I can impart to you the way of taming it!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Is Elder willing to teach me?"

The middle-aged man was feeling distressed over this matter when the other party spoke these words. Narrowing his eyes, his face grew slightly red in agitation, "Elder, may I ask if there's anything you need help with? As long as it is within my abilities, I won't speak a single word of complaint!"

Knowing that there was no such thing as a free lunch in the world, even though the middle-aged cultivator was thrilled by the idea, he didn't allow it to consume his rationality.

"I've nothing that requires your help, and given your cultivation realm, you won't find it worth to be used by me. However... I can't allow my techniques to be leaked. Since it's fate that brought us together, I'll teach you the method, but you'll have to acknowledge me as your teacher!"

Zhang Xuan glanced at the other party.

"Acknowledge you as my teacher?" The middle-aged cultivator had thought of the countless different request that the other party could come up with, but even so, Zhang Xuan's words caught him by surprise, and for a moment, he became dumbfounded.

Chapter 296

Student Jiang Shu

He had heard of experts injuring others because of a mere disagreement and had also heard of experts breaking societal conventions.

But he had never heard of experts going around accepting random strangers as students....

The middle-aged man blinked his eyes.

The ability to achieve Zongshi realm pinnacle bore testimony to his talents, but he was also aware that he was a far cry from true geniuses.

He wasn't a genius, yet the other party, without thinking twice, offered to accept him as his disciple....

What in the world is going on?

"That's right! Are you bewildered why I would accept you as my student?" Zhang Xuan shook his hands casually. With profound intent and composure reflecting in his eyes, he spoke, "Your talent isn't top-notch and your cultivation isn't anything. Therefore, there should be no reason for me to have taken a fancy to you, right?"

"I...."

Having his thoughts verbalized, the middle-aged cultivator smiled awkwardly.

"I watched your battle with the Crimson Tiger, you complemented the [Verdant Stream Movement Technique] with [Hong Yan Fist]. Even though it's quite a good combo, you are unable to display the full might of these skills. If I'm not wrong, the Hong Yan Fist which you practice is incomplete!"

Zhang Xuan said, as a matter-of-factly.

"Elder.... How did you know?" The middle-aged man's face warped in shock

immediately.

The Verdant Stream Movement Technique was a famous movement technique in Tianwu Kingdom, so it wasn't surprising that the other party knew it. However, Hong Yan Fist was his exclusive technique. He happened to stumble upon the grave of a Zhizun expert inside a valley during his travels and, in it, he found the Hong Yan Fist secret manual.

The fist technique was created by an elder named Hong Yan. The technique allows the user to exert an immense force that is capable of breaking through even a savage beast's resilient defense.

Even though the secret manual left in the grave of the expert was an incomplete version, after practicing the technique for many years, the middle-aged cultivator had already mastered it, and he had since always regarded it as his trump card in times of danger. During the battle with the Crimson Tiger, he executed the technique with the intention of brushing up his skills. Never in his dreams did he expect that this elder would be able to recognize it in a single glance.

Zhang Xuan didn't reply his question. Rather, he continued impassively, "The Hong Yan Fist emphasizes heavily on brute force through huge motions. If you practiced just this battle technique, even though it is incomplete, there wouldn't be any adverse side effects. However, you cultivated the [Three Cun Fist] along with it. The main concept behind the idea is a burst of strength within three cun of space. The idea of huge motions and explosive strength is at odds with each other. If I'm not wrong, you should have some stubborn ailments on you!"

"I...."

The middle-aged man shuddered in astonishment and hurriedly clasped his fist out of respect, "Elder.... you're right!"

The very first battle technique that he ever practiced was the Three Cun Fist.

Subsequently, when he encountered the Hong Yan Fist, he knew that it was likely that the two techniques would be in conflict, but was unwilling to allow such a powerful fist technique pass him by. Thus, he chose to practice it forcefully. He thought that given his identity, he would be able to solve all possible traumas easily. But who knew that the more he cultivated the technique, the greater the damage to his body was.

Especially in the recent few years, he could already sense that his stamina was far lacking as compared to before. This was precisely the reason why he wanted to tame this young Crimson Tiger. If anything happened to him, he could still ensure the safety of his kins.

"As a master teacher, despite knowing that there is a conflict between both fist techniques, you chose to go ahead and practice it, damaging your own body. Foolish." Zhang Xuan spoke sharply.

"Elder.... You know that I'm a master teacher?" The middle-aged man stared at Zhang Xuan in disbelief.

In the previous battle, he had utilized both the Hong Yan Fist and Three Cui Fist, thus it wasn't surprising for the other party to be able to tell that much. However, he wasn't dressed in the master teacher robe and didn't don the emblem either. How did the other party know that he was a master teacher?

He didn't say anything that would have betrayed his identity!

"When you fought with the Crimson Tiger, you were able to predict and avoid the other party's lethal blows. Even though this is partly due to the numerous fights with it which resulted in familiarity with each other's techniques, the fact you were able to exploit the other party's weaknesses to launch counterattacks precisely every single time proves that you are a master teacher!" Zhang Xuan said.

Master teachers possess the State of Insight, which allows them to peer into the flaws and weaknesses of each battle technique. It is through such that they are able to pinpoint problems and their causes and steer their students to the right path.

This is also the reason why master teachers are the strongest among cultivators of the same realm.

In the battle just now, the middle-aged cultivator was able to strike a good balance between offense and defense. Despite facing a ferocious savage beast, he was able to remain calm, and every single move he made was purposeful. Any cultivator could have easily sensed that something was amiss.

Furthermore, when he fought with the Crimson Tiger previously, he had executed several battle techniques. As such, a book on him had been compiled in the Library of Heaven's Path....

"Elder, your eye of discernment is incredible...."

The middle-aged man contemplated for a brief moment and suddenly, his eyes lit up. "Can it be that.... is elder a master teacher as well?"

Other than a master teacher, he couldn't think of anyone else who would be capable of discerning the battle technique he practiced, deduce that there was a problem with his body, and even identify his occupation.

As Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back, a mountainous breeze tugged on his robe, creating an impression reminiscent of a saint. "I spend my time traveling around the world, and it has been years since someone last addressed me by that title!"

"As expected, elder is a master teacher...."

Hearing the other party's words, the middle-aged man's eyes shone in agitation.

The fact that the other party was at least a Zhizun realm cultivator and that his discernment ability far surpassed his meant that.... he was at least a 3-star master teacher!

If he was a master teacher, he could understand why the other party would request him to become his student although they had just met.

Master teachers bear the responsibility of educating the masses. Upon meeting the puzzled, they are to answer their doubts. This is precisely the reason why the human race was able to prosper throughout the entire land.

It was the reason why master teachers became an occupation respected by the masses.

The hierarchy among master teachers was strict. It was normal for a low-tier master teacher to address a high-tier master teacher as teacher, and there weren't rules against acknowledging a fellow master teacher as one's teacher.

More importantly, given how the other party was able to see through his problems in a single glance, and that he could help him tame the Crimson Tiger, it would be nothing but advantageous for him to become his student!

"It's my honor to become elder's student!"

Holding back his agitation, he hastily replied with a reddened face.

"Do you not doubt me anymore?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"I dare not to!"

The middle-aged man quickly nodded his head.

Given the other party's indiscernible cultivation realm, Half-Zhizun tamed beast, and incredible discernment ability, even if the other party were to now claim that he wasn't a master teacher, he would definitely not believe it.

"The Crimson Tiger that you fought with has yet to mature, and his strength hasn't reached its peak yet. If you can find a way to raise its cultivation to Zongshi realm pinnacle, it won't be difficult for you to tame it!"

Now that the other party was convinced of his identity as a master teacher, the rest was easy to accomplish. Without further ado, Zhang Xuan began to toss out the benefits.

"That.... I know that as well, and I've tried. However, I couldn't find anything that can raise its cultivation...." The middle-aged man hesitated for a moment before answering.

Master teachers are expected to be knowledgeable in all occupations, and the middle-aged cultivator dabbled in beast taming, so he knew that he would have to offer some incentive to tame the other party. However.... he had experimented numerous methods, but wasn't able to find anything which could help this Crimson Tiger achieve a breakthrough.

After all, the savage beast's strength was shackled to its age. There are no herbs in this world that can raise one's age! Even if such a herb did exist, that would be equivalent to pulling on a seedling for it to grow taller. If the Crimson Tiger were to learn of it, it would definitely feel a resentment toward him, and by then, it would be impossible for him to tame it.

"Do you have any pills on you?"

Zhang Xuan asked impassively.

"I do.... I have a few pills for injuries!" Not knowing the intention behind the question, the middle-aged cultivator hesitated for a moment before replying.

"Pass it to me!" Zhang Xuan stretched out his hand.

"Yes!" Even though he didn't understand why the other party wanted his pills, he didn't hesitate at all. With a flick of his wrist, a jade bottle appeared in his palm. With a light toss, the pill rode on his zhenqi and floated slowly to Zhang Xuan.

Even though his actions were simple, it displayed the amazing control he had over his zhenqi.

Zhang Xuan was astonished by the other party's feat but hid his expression well. Grabbing the jade bottle, he opened it casually and saw ten smooth, round pills within. Every single one of the pills had reached grade-2!

Every single grade-2 pill was worth an exponential sum, and the entire bottle of pills was likely to be worth more than ten million! Probably, only a master teacher would bring such a bottle around with him and throw it so casually.

Pouring these pills onto his palm, he started to infuse the pure Heaven's Path zhenqi into them. Then, he crushed the ten pills to form one large pill.

The only way for an immature savage beast to achieve a breakthrough was the Bloodline Evolution. Zhang Xuan didn't know what medicine was capable of inducing a Bloodline Evolution in a Crimson Tiger, but he knew that.... his Heaven's Path zhenqi could!

The Crimson Tiger was at Zongshi realm advanced stage while Zhang Xuan was a step away from reaching Zongshi realm. Thus, his Heaven's Path zhenqi should still be highly effective in inducing a Bloodline Evolution in the former.

However, the Heaven's Path zhenqi was too pure, and the other party was a master teacher who also possessed incredible discernment ability. If he were to help the Crimson Tiger achieve a breakthrough directly, it was possible that the other party might notice something suspicious. If so, his efforts in disguising as an expert would have been in vain.

Furthermore, if Zhang Xuan wanted to infuse Heaven's Path zhenqi straight into the other party's meridians, he had to ensure that the other party would not retaliate. Be

it his own strength or the middle-aged cultivator's strength, it was impossible for them to knock the Crimson Tiger out.

Thus, even if he wanted to do so, it was unfeasible!

As such, he chose to pump his zhenqi into the pills instead. As soon as the pills dissolve within the Crimson Tiger's body, the Heaven's Path zhenqi would permeate into its body. As it circulated along its bloodstream, it would cleanse its bloodline, thus inducing in the savage beast a Bloodline Evolution.

However, the method was exceptionally wasteful on pills. The higher the grade of a pill, the more zhenqi it could hold. In just a short moment, ten million gold coin worth of pills went to waste.

But of course, to Zhang Xuan, it made no difference whatsoever. The pills didn't belong to him.

Furthermore, ten million gold coins for a tamed Zongshi realm pinnacle savage beast.... This was an extremely good deal.

"Alright, I've modified the pill a little. Once you feed it to the Crimson Tiger, it would be able to break through its current cultivation realm immediately. As for how you'll make it submit to you afterward, that would depend on your skills!"

With a flick, the pill shot straight back at the middle-aged man.

He didn't possess the other party's control over zhenqi, so he could only use this crude method.

"Yes!" The middle-aged cultivator grabbed the pill but found it hard to believe the other party's words.

He had bought these recovery pills from the Apothecary Guild and knew that there was nothing unique about them. All the elder did was to grab the pills for a moment and then knead all ten of them into a large pill. Is just this... sufficient for the Crimson Tiger to achieve a breakthrough?

Why does it sound so unreliable?"

"Find the Crimson Tiger and feed this to it now!" Zhang Xuan didn't bother to explain.

"Yes!" Even though the middle-aged cultivator held doubts, he didn't think that the other party would lie to him. After all, as a 3-star master teacher and a Zhizun realm expert, there was no need for him to go through so much trouble. Thus, as he nodded his head, he kept the pill properly and dashed in the direction where the Crimson Tiger escaped.

Instead of following him, Zhang Xuan waited calmly on the back of the Howling Firmament Beast.

Around two hours later, a violent roar sounded. Then, the middle-aged cultivator could be seen returning on the Crimson Tiger's back.

This time, without any hesitation, he leaped off the back of the tiger and knelted to the floor, "Student Jiang Shu pays respect to teacher!"

Chapter 297

Taking Liberties with Zhao Ya

"Un!"

He saw that the Crimson Tiger, which hovered about the middle-aged Jiang Shu, had indeed reached Zongshi realm pinnacle. Knowing that the other party had successfully tamed the savage beast, Zhang Xuan nodded his head in satisfaction. He turned to Jiang Shu and spoke in an indifferent manner.

"This teacher of yours is called Yang Xuan, and I just happened to pass by Tianwu Kingdom and decided to stay here for awhile. During this period of time, you'll be considered as my student, but after my departure, I'll remain as myself, and you'll remain as yourself. After all, we're just mere passer-bys in each other's life. However, you are not to use my name to conduct villainous acts, otherwise, I will kill you!"

Zhang Xuan's motive for accepting this student was to form the golden page. Naturally, he couldn't bring him around and, thus, decided to make things clear beforehand.

"Yes!"

Jiang Shu nodded as a tinge of disappointment crept onto his face.

Earlier, when the other party said that he would take him as a student, even though he didn't outright decline, he felt resistant to the idea.

However, when he fed that pill to the Crimson Tiger and the latter really achieved a breakthrough, he realized that it was his fortune to be able to come under the tutelage of the other party.

Just by kneading an ordinary recovery pill, the other party was able to turn it into a treasure that would help savage beasts achieve a breakthrough. Despite the vast knowledge he possessed as a master teacher, he had never heard of such a matter.

Just this feat alone allowed Jiang Shu to realize that the person before him wasn't likely to be simply a 3-star master teacher.

"May I know where does teacher live? So that in time to come, I may pay my respect!"

Even if it were just for a short period, becoming Yang Shi's student was a huge advantage. Jiang Shu clasped his fist, hiding his disappointment.

"I do not have a definite abode as of now. Once I find one, I will send someone to inform you!" Zhang Xuan waved his hands casually. "Alright, you should return first!"

To induce gratitude in another person and form the golden page wasn't something that could be done all of the sudden. Zhang Xuan was already making great progress, having collected the other party as his student and establishing trust.

If he were rush into things, he might just mess it up instead.

"Yes!"

Knowing that experts have their own way of doing things, Jiang Shu didn't dare to inquire any further. After leaping onto the Crimson Tiger, he turned around and left.

Hu!

After the other party left, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

It was troublesome to act as an expert before a master teacher.

After all, master teachers possessed incredible abilities of discernment. A single lapse in his disguise could have resulted in failure.

"Right! I forgot to ask him where Tianwu Academy is!"

Zhang Xuan had intended to ask about the location of Tianwu Academy so that he could gather a few more students to groom in one go, but he ended up forgetting about this matter. His only choice was to return to the city to look around.

Soon, he was once again back in the capital.

This time round, with no one stalking him, he was able to conduct his inquiries freely.

Tianwu Academy was where the talents of the capital were gathered, hence nearly everyone knew about it.

Thus, it didn't take long before he found out about its approximate location.

It was actually in the vicinity of the Master Teacher Pavilion, near the center of the city. To travel there by foot would take three to four hours.

Upon hearing that it was so far away, Zhang Xuan dropped his plan of finding a student today.

When he first arrived at Tianwu Kingdom, the sun had already set. Eating dinner, competing with Ji Mo, and reading books had taken up more than two hours of his time and, after which, he dealt with the 'assassins' and accepted Jiang Shu as his student, taking up another two hours of his time. With reference to the time system used in his previous life, it was already nearing eleven o'clock.

Even if he were to rush over now, everyone would have been asleep by the time he arrived. If he were to sneak into the academy compounds in the middle of the night to solicit some students.... Others might just think that he was some corpse who had climbed out from his grave and bury him back in.

"I leave this for tomorrow. For the time being, I'd better look for a place to rest for the night!"

After a long journey here, as well as the painter competition, fighting, and feigning as an expert, he had long been drained of energy.

"Un? [Tianwu Inn]? Alright, I'll stay here!"

After looking around the streets for a short while, an inn appeared before Zhang Xuan and he walked right in.

The inn was wide and clean, and after finding out at the receptionist that there was an empty room available, he then chose to settle down here.

The moment he stepped into the room, a few figures rushed into the lounge.

"Is Zhao Ya not back yet?"

"Yes, Liu shi!" Wang Ying replied apprehensively.

"Didn't I instruct all of you to return in two hours regardless of whether you manage

to find him? Why is she not back?" Liu shi frowned.

"All of us.... split up the moment we left. We didn't see her on our way back in, so we thought that she had already returned to her room. We then waited for her, but she didn't come out after such a long time...." Wang Ying replied fearfully.

"Alright. Lu Xun, bring Zheng Yang to look around the east. Sun Qiang, you bring Liu Yang and Yuan Tao to search the west. Wang Ying, Huang Yu, and I go to the north. As for the south, that's where the city gates are, so there's no need to look around there!"

Liu shi instructed. "Regardless of your outcome, just like the last time, all of you must return within two hours!"

"Yes!"

Everyone nodded their heads before proceeding out of the inn.

....

Physician Bai had been on a roll lately.

Ever since he returned from Red Lotus Range, all the physicians that he met treated him with utmost respect and deference.

In fact, even the guild leader of the Physician Guild had a complete change in attitude.

From an insignificant snub figure, he was now the center of attention. All of those haughty 2-star physicians from before didn't even dare to speak loudly before him....

He was getting increasingly happy and increasingly satisfied with his new life.

"To think that getting knocked out in an alley would reap such benefits...."

Today, the guild leader even proclaimed him as his brother and drank with him. By the time he left and was back on the streets, he was already feeling very groggy.

The turning point in his life came from being knocked unconscious in the Red Lotus City.

After waking up, the attitude that all the physicians had toward him changed.

He had even thought that he was dreaming.

But of course, in the past few days, he had managed to understand the situation fully.

That fellow from that day, who appeared together with Princess Mo Yu, knocked him out and saved the Great Herb King in his appearance and name.

The reason why these physicians were behaving so friendly to him was first, to be able to purchase good medicinal herb from the Great Herb King through him at a discounted price, and secondly, to find out what the Contract Gu actually was, and how it could be treated.

He was unconscious and naked in an alley throughout the entire incident, so how could he know the Great Herb King? Needless to say, the Contract Gu....

However, this change in his life didn't come easy. He had become so highly regarded and it would be embarrassing if he were to speak the truth. Wouldn't it be likely that he would get beaten to death?

Thus, after contemplating carefully, he decided to carry on with the lie.

Whenever someone asked him about the incident with the Great Herb King, he would change the topic forcefully.

Since he was unwilling to speak, the crowd assumed that some kind of important secret was involved, so they didn't dare to continue asking. Thus, his status grew instead.

This outcome left him thrilled. Every time he saw an alley, he would dive in expectantly in hopes that he would be knocked out again so as to gain greater prestige.

After bidding the guild leader farewell, he was on his way back to his residence all alone. Upon noticing an alley, he was just about to enter when he saw a lady walking toward him from the opposite direction.

The lady was young, her age between sixteen and seventeen, but her facial features were extraordinarily beautiful. Even Princess Mo Yu, who was reputed as the number one beauty of Tianwu Kingdom, wasn't a match for her. He had never met such a beautiful person in his life.

He had a reputation for being lecherous, and that was the main reason why Mo Yu disregarded him then. Having pretended to be an expert for such a long time, he had already begun to feel deprived. Upon confirming that there was no one around, as well as the under the influence of alcohol, his eyes started to glow.

....

Knowing that Zhang laoshi appeared in the Painter Guild, Zhao Ya and the others left the inn to look for him.

For greater efficiency, all of them split up to search alone.

They looked around the surrounding alleys and taverns, but there wasn't a single sign of him.

Having just completed searching this alley, Zhao Ya was rubbing her rather exhausted eyes, intending to return to the inn before doing anything else when she saw a middle-aged man with a lustful look on his face approaching her.

"Drinking alone is boring. Lady, do you want to accompany me for a drink?" Physician Bai blocked her path.

"Get out of my way!"

Zhao Ya frowned.

After her Pure Yin Body was activated, her appearance and disposition had become more refined. Thus, she would often meet with this kind of harassment, just that they mostly came from those of her age. Yet, upon seeing a person who was old enough to be her grandfather appearing before her, her expression became especially awful.

"What if I refuse?"

Physician Bai Chan harrumphed.

It was already close to midnight, and the bustling streets were nearly empty. Furthermore, even if there were anyone around the area, they would be hesitant to stop him once they notice his extravagant clothes.

"You're courting death!"

Seeing how the other fellow was behaving like a rogue, Zhao Ya's eyebrows knitted together. With a flick of her wrist, a sword appeared in her palm.

Circulating her Pure Yin Body fully, a frigid sword qi immediately was sent straight at the fellow before her.

"You don't know what's good for you!"

Seeing how Zhao Ya dared to swing her sword at him, Physician Bai Chan harrumphed coldly before stepping forward.

Ding!

Zhao Ya's sword fell into the other party's hand.

Even though Physician Bai Chan was someone whom Zhang Xuan could knock out with a single punch, he was after all a Tongxuan realm pinnacle expert. He wasn't someone that Zhao Ya, who had only opened two acupoints, could stand against.

"This is bad!"

Having her sword taken from her, Zhao Ya was astonished. She could tell that with her cultivation, it was impossible for her to handle this person. Thus, she dashed straight toward the inn immediately.

With the awakening of her Pure Yin Body, even though she didn't become as fast as Wang Ying, her speed was incredible, nevertheless. She wasn't far from the inn and once she was there, Liu shi would surely be able to deal with this rogue.

"Trying to escape? Do you think that I will allow you to do that?"

It wasn't easy for him to come across such a beauty, so how could Bai Chan allow her to escape so easily? Thus, he chased after her hastily.

"Zhao Ya?"

Sprinting with all her might, Zhao Ya soon arrived at the lounge of the inn and encountered Liu shi and the others, who were just about to set off.

"What's wrong?"

"What happened?"

Seeing her charge into the lounge anxiously, everyone became perplexed.

"Someone tried to take advantage of me...."

Zhao Ya pointed to the back.

At that moment, Physician Bai Chan walked into the lounge as well.

"What?"

Upon hearing that someone wanted to take advantage of her, Zheng Yang and the others flew into a rage and prepared to charge at Physician Bai Chan.

"Hold your horses!"

Seeing through the other party's cultivation in a single glance, Liu shi halted them immediately.

Upon seeing the people present, a gleam flashed across Physician Bai Chan's eyes. "It's no wonder why you escaped so quickly, you have backups here! If so, this will make the matter much easier!"

As a cunning old wily, he had experienced such situations innumerable times, so he was able to react immediately without panicking.

"This friend, may I know, why you are chasing my student?"

He knew that Tianwu Royal City had many powerful and influential clans and that members of these clans were everywhere and could be anyone on the street. Therefore, even though he felt angry, Liu shi held himself back, stepped forward, and clasped his fist.

"This young lady stole my item, so I chased her to take it back! Since you all know one another, this will make this matter easier to settle. You either can choose to return my item, or leave her for me to deal with!"

Physician Bai Chan spoke, casually gesturing with his hand.

"Stole your item? You.... You're lying!"

Not expecting that the other party would frame her as a thief after trying to take liberties with her, Zhao Ya's face flushed in anger.

Sword qi

This refers to the emission of a surge of energy from the swinging of a sword.

Chapter 298

Framed

"May I know what it is that you have lost?"

How could Liu shi not tell that the other party was lying? Hearing the other party's words, his eyebrows knitted together into a frown.

"I lost a stalk of precious medicinal herb!"

Physician Bai Chan had been used to carrying out this scam, so he continued calmly, "Hand it over now, or else I will report all of you and have you jailed!"

"Liu shi, I didn't take his things. He's slandering me!"

Zhao Ya explained hurriedly.

"Indeed, Liu shi. Zhao Ya's father is the city lord of Baiyu City, and she has everything she needs. It isn't possible that she resorts to stealing!"

"Zhang laoshi is an apothecary. There is no need at all for her to steal!"

Zheng Yang and the others stepped forward.

Having spent so much time together, all of them naturally placed their trust in Zhao Ya's character.

How could she possibly steal the belongings of this shabby middle-aged man?

"Un!"

Liu shi held his hand up to silence everyone, before raising his head to look at the other party. "I am Beiwu Kingdom's 1-star master teacher, Liu Ling! These are my students whom I have brought along, and there seems to be a misunderstanding...."

After which, he flicked his hands and a token representing his identity as a master

teacher appeared in his palm.

"1-star master teacher?"

Physician Bai Chan was taken aback.

Master teachers possess an extremely high standing in Tianwu Royal City, and with them both having a 1-star grade in their respective occupations, he was far beyond what a mere physician could compare up to.

However, the truly prestigious ones in Tianwu Royal City were the 2-star master teachers.

Furthermore, as a veteran in the city, he didn't fear a mere outsider. So what if he was a master teacher? As long as the other party didn't come from Tianwu Royal City, he had ten thousand ways to silence him.

At the same time, he recalled how respectful the other 1-star physicians were to him recently, and his pride immediately swelled. With a darkened face, he said, "Misunderstanding? Even the guild leader of the Physician Guild treats me respectfully, and you say that I framed your little student?"

"That's not what I meant...."

Liu shi didn't expect the other party to disregard his identity, so he quickly explained himself.

In Tianxuan Kingdom and Beiwu Kingdom, no one would have dared to offend a 1-star master teacher. However, in a Tier 1 Kingdom like Tianwu, the standing of master teachers took a dive.

Some of the powerful clans even raised master teachers of their own.

This was precisely why even though the identity of a master teacher could induce fear in most people, those who had truly strong backings wouldn't care too much about it. Unless.... the person was a 2-star master teacher!

With the Master Teacher Pavilion behind his back, Liu shi wasn't worried that anyone would do anything to him. However, Zhao Ya and the others were different.

He didn't have many connections here, and if this matter wasn't resolved properly, it could potentially bring about a lot of trouble.

If the other party tried to be shameless, it might even affect his reputation as a master teacher.

"If that's not what you meant, then what do you mean? Your student stole my possession, and I have already chased her all the way here. Do you mean to say that I chased her for nothing?"

Physician Bai flung his hands imposingly.

He knew what the other party was afraid of, and this boosted his courage.

"Masters, what's wrong?"

Because both sides were speaking loudly, their quarrel caught the attention of the boss of Tianwu Inn.

"These customers of yours have stolen my possession, what do you think that we should do?" Physician Bai Chan pulled out a chair and sat down.

"This...."

The boss panicked.

Before he came over, an attendant had already informed him of the situation. On one side was a 1-star master teacher, and on the other was the prominent Physician Bai Chan. He couldn't afford to offend any of them.

"I shall not make things difficult for you. Since you can't settle this, let's just invite a patrol squad in!"

Lifting his eyelids slightly, Physician Bai Chan felt confident. A master teacher that hailed from a small place such as Beiwu Kingdom.... there wasn't a reason to feel fear!

"Yes, yes!"

The boss heaved a sigh of relief. He gestured to the attendant in a hurry, who then ran out hastily.

Tianwu Royal City was huge, and there were all kinds of fights and conflicts every day. Only by resolving them in a timely manner could order be maintained. Thus, the royal family formed patrol squads to uphold the peace within the city.

In case of trouble, one could inform and invite them over.

"That.... May I know what kind of medicinal herb did you lose? It's not convenient to alarm a patrol squad at this time of the night. Why don't we settle this matter privately!"

Upon hearing the other party mention calling for a patrol squad, Liu Shi chose to give in.

It was a major disadvantage being in the other party's territory, it being likely that the patrol squad would side with the opponent. If they pronounce that Zhao Ya stole the other party's possession, she would have to go through all kinds of interrogation and investigation.

If it were just him, he wouldn't have feared the other party. Without the Master Teacher Pavilion's approval, no one would dare to capture a master teacher.

However Zhao Ya and the others came from the humble Tianxuan Kingdom, and they didn't possess any formidable background. The moment investigation began, it was likely that it would drag on for months. Furthermore, once they were thrown into the jail, wouldn't the other party would gain the power to twist their words?

His 'senior' had entrusted these students to him. If they were to be locked up, how could he account to his 'senior'?

Thus, he chose to settle this matter peacefully in order to avoid trouble.

"What medicinal herb did I lose? Since you want to know, I'll tell you then. I lost a thousand-year-old [Green Steel Flower]. It is worth.... at least ten million gold coins! I'm fine with settling it privately. You can choose to either pay me ten million gold coins or hand this girl over to me."

Physician Bai Chan looked at them gleefully.

Small matter! So you wish to settle this privately now? Let's see how I play with you!

"You.... Bullshit!"

"How dare you frame me!"

Zhao Ya didn't expect the other party to be so shameless. Her face turned scarlet in anger, and her breathing hastened.

Zheng Yang and the others clenched their fists as well.

"A thousand-year-old Green Steel Flower?"

Liu shi's expression turned awful too.

As a master teacher, although he didn't specialize in medicine, he had heard of the Green Steel Flower. Those which had grown to reach a maturity of a thousand years were extremely valuable, and even with ten million gold coins, one might not necessarily be able to purchase one.

Given his many years of savings, he did have ten million gold coins. However, anyone, even him would find it hard to accept to being scammed of so much money all of the sudden.

"That's right!"

Physician Bai Chan's finger drummed on the table. Lifting his eyelid slightly, he said, "Right after bumping into your student, the medicinal herb which I just bought went missing. If it isn't her who is responsible, who else can it be? You can either pay me the money or hand her over for me to interrogate. Otherwise, I shall publicize this matter, claiming that you turn a blind eye to your student's misdeed. Let's see how the Master Teacher Pavilion deals with you!"

Pouring a cup of water for himself as he spoke, he glanced at Liu shi gleefully.

"This...."

Liu shi's was livid.

The other party seemed to be clear of a master teacher's weakness.

All master teachers valued their own reputation. If he were to be framed of condoning

his student's misdeeds, how will he be able to he take the 2-star examination in future? How will he face the world?

Hualala!

The entire room was silent when a group of men arrived; the attendant had returned with a patrol squad.

All of them had a Pixue realm cultivation at the minimum, and the one standing at the forefront was a Tongxuan realm expert.

They were dressed fully in steel and carried swords in their hands, appearing to be a cold-blooded bunch.

"Paying respect to Physician Bai Chan!"

Upon stepping into the lounge, the members of the patrol squad glanced around the room and recognized Bai Chan immediately. They walked forward and clasped their fists.

To name the persons who were the most prominent in the capital recently, without a doubt, the first place would go to Third Princess Mo Yu, and after which, the second place would go to this person before them.

It was said that he cured an illness which even 3-star physicians were incapable of treating. If so, his ability must have far surpassed a 3-star grade, just that he was unable to take the examination due to his lacking cultivation.

"Oh, it's Squadron Leader Yao!"

With a brief look, Bai Chan recognized the other party as well. He waved his hands grandly and proclaimed "Since it's you, this will make things easier. This girl stole the medicinal herb which the Great Herb King just gave me, a thousand-year-old Green Steel Flower. What do you say about how we should handle this?"

"The Great Herb King?"

Squadron Leader Yao's complexion changed.

The Great Herb King was an extremely famous person in the capital. He represented

the Poison Hall and, as a result, could almost be considered an overlord in the Red Lotus City, such that even the Tianwu royal family dare not deploy troops against him.

If the Great Herb King gave him a medicinal herb personally, it appeared that the rumors were true; he had to deal with this matter prudently.

"Audacious! How dare you steal Physician Bai Chan's medicinal herb?"

Harrumphing coldly, Squadron Leader Yao walked over to Liu shi, "This master teacher here, in respect for your identity, I will not make a move on you. So, hand over your student so that I can interrogate her! Rest assured, the patrol squads are impartial, and if she is innocent, I will do her justice. However, if she really stole something, even if you are a master teacher, we won't hesitate to raise this to the Master Teacher Pavilion!"

"This.... Please calm down, we are willing to settle this matter in private!"

Seeing how the both of them were acquainted, Liu shi knew that Zhao Ya would surely be deemed as a thief if she were to be captured. Thus, after taking a deep breath, he decided to give in.

"Liu shi, you mustn't!"

"Zhao Ya didn't steal anything, why should we settle this matter privately?"

"That's right, Liu shi. The moment we choose to settle this matter privately, it would mean that Zhao Ya had taken his item. This will be harmful to teacher's reputation...."

....

Hearing that Liu shi intended to settle the matter privately, Zheng Yang, Lu Xun, and the others voiced their disagreement immediately.

The moment this matter was chosen to be settled privately, it would mean that they were guilty, that they had really stolen the other party's possession. This would blemish Liu shi's reputation, and if the matter reached the Master Teacher Pavilion, he might even be taken in for investigation.

It would be impossible to explain himself then.

"Enough! Keep your mouths shut!"

Liu shi's face darkened.

If he didn't keep the matter privately, Zhao Ya would surely be taken in for interrogation. How would he dare to face his 'senior' if a mishap happened to his student while she was under him?

"You choose to settle it privately?"

Not expecting the other party to be willing to pay ten million gold coins for a student's sake, Physician Bai Chan was surprised. He then adapted quickly and sneered, "I'm fine with settling it privately. However, I recalled that this thousand-year-old Green Steel Flower is incredibly valuable, and it is impossible to get it at ten million, requiring at least fifty million. Take this sum out and I'll leave immediately. Otherwise, I apologize, but I'll be taking her with me today!"

"Fifty million? You.... what kind of medicinal herb would be worth so much money?"

"You just said it's worth ten million, how can you inflate the price so abruptly? Damn it...."

....

Hearing the other party raise the price to fifty million, everyone burst into an uproar and glared at him furiously.

Liu shi clenched his knuckles.

In his numerous years as a master teacher, he had never suffered such humiliation!

"Why? If you wish to settle this privately, hurry up. My time is precious and I don't have any to waste on you!"

Physician Bai Chan raised his cup and gazed at Liu shi gleefully.

"You...."

Liu shi's face steeled.

"Liu shi, I'll go with them. He is obviously the one who tried to take advantage of me, yet now he frames me for stealing his medicinal herb. I don't believe that Tianwu Kingdom is such a lawless place!"

Stepping forward, Zhao Ya declared loudly.

....

Meanwhile, in the room, Zhang Xuan had just washed up and as he was about to go to sleep, he froze all of a sudden.

"That sounds like.... Zhao Ya? Can it be that they have arrived?"

Chapter 299

A Beating

After half a month getting along with each other, how could Zhang Xuan not recognize Zhao Ya's voice? Who else could the owner of that angry voice be, if not her?

After a brief moment adjusting his clothes, he pushed open his door and came out, immediately noticing the two hostile and opposing sides in the lounge.

"It really is her!"

Upon seeing so many familiar figures, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

He didn't expect that they would arrive at Tianwu Kingdom right after him. Furthermore, they happened to put up lodging at the same inn, which was extremely lucky.

"Is that person.... Bai Chan?"

Glancing at the fellow standing opposite Zhao Ya and Bai Chan, Zhang Xuan realized that it was the fellow whom he knocked unconscious at the alley back then!

"Seems like this fellow is trying to bully my student...."

The situation wasn't complicated and it didn't take long for Zhang Xuan to understand the situation using just his own observation.

Zhang Xuan knew very well what kind of person Zhao Ya was. Stealing? What a joke!

On the other hand, this Physician Bai Chan was greedy and lustful. He wasn't anything good.

Since Zhang Xuan happened to meet him here, he could use the chance to teach him a lesson.

Chuckling lightly, he lifted his foot and began walking over.

....

"Zhao Ya, you can't go...."

"You won't know what will happen if you follow them...."

Hearing Zhao Ya's decision, Zheng Yang and the others panicked.

It was clear that the physician and the patrol squad were in cahoots. If she were to follow them, who knows what kind of crime would be pinned on her?

"Can't you tell? He's doing this intentionally! No matter how much money you give him, he'll just keep raising the price!" Zhao Ya said.

Everyone fell silent.

She was right.

The other party was clearly taking advantage of them just because they were outsiders. Even if they agree to give him money, he would simply say that it was insufficient. Perhaps, he might even claim that he has lost something else. Rather than to face humiliation here, she might as well follow the patrol squad and vie for her innocence.

The crowd thought that the capital of a Tier 1 Kingdom would be filled with hopes and that they could fulfill their dreams here. Yet, right after arriving, they encountered such an incident and a sense of helplessness gloomed over their hearts.

"If you go, it would be falling for the other party's trap!"

"I have no choice. The patrol squad is here and looking at how adamant he is on insisting that I stole his herb, I will be taken in regardless!"

With their fists clenched tight, everyone was infuriated, but they found themselves without any solution.

"Fifty million.... So be it! I am still willing to.... settle it privately!"

Liu shi shook his head, full of indignation.

Just as the saying goes, 'A dragon by the shallow shores would be ridiculed by a prawn, and a tiger which leaves its mountain would be bullied by a dog.'

If such a thing happened in Beiwu Kingdom, this fellow before him would have been beaten to death right on the spot.

But over here, despite his status as a dignified master teacher, he was rendered completely helpless.

"Liu shi...."

The crowd was incensed. They squeezed their fists tightly, and their faces were steeled.

"Enough, it's just a small matter. There's no need for anyone to go!"

Just as everyone thought that this matter was a hopeless cause, a slightly lazy voice echoed, and with his hands inside his pocket, Zhang Xuan strolled over.

"Ah.... Teacher?"

"Zhang laoshi, why.... are you here?"

"Zhang laoshi, you put up lodging here as well?"

Seeing him emerge from inside the inn, everyone was taken aback for a moment.

Then, furious joy overwhelmed them.

They had been searching for him the entire night, but to think that he would be right under their noses.

Ignoring the crowd which was filled with excitement, Zhang Xuan sauntered to Physician Bai Chan and smiled, "Are you the one who is bullying my student?"

Thinking that victory was in his grasp, Bai Chan sipped on his tea, not even bothering to lift his head to look at Zhang Xuan. As such, he didn't recognize him. Gesturing grandly, he harrumphed, "It's your student who stole my possession. I am merely retrieving what I lost...."

"Steal your head!"

Before Bai Chan could finish his words, he heard a voice, and a shadow flitted across his vision. A teapot had crashed onto his skull.

Peng!

The teapot shattered, and steaming hot water drenched his entire body. Scalded, Bai Chan leaped up abruptly and fanned himself hard.

"You are fricking courting death!"

These days, be it the guild leader, nobles, or prestigious clans, who didn't treat him with respect? Yet, this fellow slammed a teapot on his head! How dare he!

Hair fell off from his entire face under the hot water.

His head, which had become as red as a braized pig head, was steaming, and the aroma of cooked flesh could be smelled.

"Teacher...."

"This is.... way too intense!"

Zhao Ya and the others widened their mouths in shock, and their lower jaws nearly fell to the ground.

They knew that Zhang laoshi would definitely stand up for them, but they didn't expect that.... he would do it like that!

Smashing a pot of hot tea into the other party's head....

The heck!

Zhang laoshi wasn't even treating the other party as a human.

On the other hand, Liu Ling and Lu Xun's lips twitched, and they nearly fainted on the spot.

If this was a matter that could be solved through brute force, why would he, as a

Zongshi realm master teacher, behave so subserviently?

Just from how arrogant the other party acted, it was clear that he possessed an extraordinary status. Furthermore, he had the patrol squad standing guard right beside him.

Yet, Zhang Xuan still chose to slap him hard in his face. Seems like.... This matter will not end peacefully.

"This is too rash...."

Liu Ling shook his head with a bitter smile.

This senior of mine has always been calm, always planning his actions carefully. Why is he acting so rashly today?

This is Tianwu Kingdom, not Tianxuan Kingdom. To beat someone up right after arriving, not to mention, a person of tremendous standing.... The thorns in the path ahead can already be seen clearly.

"Has this fellow gone mad?"

"That is Physician Bai Chan...."

Squadron Leader Yao and the other squad members didn't expect such a twist and were dumbstruck.

"Are all of you here to catch a show? This fellow made a move on me, what are you dawdling around for? Kill him...."

It took him awhile before he could recover. Seeing the patrol squad standing idly by the side, Physician Bai Chan bellowed angrily.

"Yes!"

Only then did they recover from their daze. Squadron Leader Yao drew his sword and charged forward, "Lad, how dare you touch Physician Bai? Do you not know who he is? How dare you attack someone in the capital, who do you think you.... Aiya, the hell!"

Before he could finish his words, a shout of agony escaped his mouth, and his face was

immediately distorted just like a fried dough twist. Then, he flew backward, flipping a few rounds before landing on the ground more than a dozen meters away.

"Squadron leader...."

The entire patrol squad flew into a frenzy.

The heck!

They were the kingdom patrol squad! They represented the kingdom's dignity, and wherever they went, people would be trembling, careful not to step on their toes. Yet, that fellow gave a tight slap to their leader....

"Lad, you are making yourself an enemy of the kingdom...."

With a roar, they charged forward to avenge their squadron leader. However, before they could finish their words, a series of crisp sounds echoed in the air.

Pah! Pah! Pah! Pah!

Their faces warped, and they were sent flying as well. In an instant, wails of agony echoed in the air.

"We're doomed, doomed...."

The inn and the attendant in the inn almost clawed out all of their hair upon witnessing this sight. They thought that this incident could be resolved quickly since the patrol squad was present.

It had been many years since anyone dared to lay their hands on a patrol squad.

The only difference was that the one ten years ago was a Zongshi realm primary stage wandering cultivator. He had a conflict with a patrol squad member and ended getting violent. Eventually, he became wanted throughout the city, and in less than a single day, he was caught and executed!

Yet, not only did this fellow beat up the entire patrol squad, he even scalded Physician Bai Chan's head into a pig-head-resembling mess....

They thought that it was just a simple affair that could be resolved quickly. To think

that it would escalate so dramatically! If they knew this would happen, they would have never gone to look for the patrol squad.... If the authorities were to blame them for housing such violent characters, their inn would be shut down immediately....

"You are courting death...."

Physician Bai Chan finally regained himself from the searing pain. Through his puffy eyes, he saw members of the patrol squad lying all over the ground. Infuriated, he turned to Zhang Xuan and declared "You're done for, you're really done for this time. To dare to lay your hands on even the patrol squad, no one can save you now...."

Before he could finish his words, he felt his throat tighten, and an excruciating pain could be felt at his neck. Zhang Xuan had lifted him up.

Pah! Pah! Pah!

He felt stinging pain on both sides of his cheeks. Just like that, he had been slapped more than a dozen times consecutively.

"No one that can save me? Are you sure?" Zhang Xuan smiled brightly.

"Wuu...."

Physician Bai Chan was on the verge of tears.

It was too painful to bear.

He had never suffered such a beating from birth.

Not daring to spout any further nonsense, he slowly opened his swollen eyes to look at the person who beat him up. He was intending to imprint the other person's features into his mind so that he could get back at him in the future. However, with this single glance, his face turned deathly pale.

Too familiar.

He was the fellow who was with Princess Mo Yu at the Red Lotus Range, as well as the one who knocked him unconscious.

The status he possessed today was all because of him....

"That's right, it's me!"

Throwing Bai Chan to the floor, Zhang Xuan said impassively.

"I...."

Bai Chan's expression became distorted.

If there was a person whom Bai Chan wanted to meet the most, it was definitely the person standing before him. It was because of his impersonation that he possessed such an important standing today. However, if there was a person whom Bai Chan would never want to meet, it was this very person as well. He could expose the fact that he wasn't the one who treated the Great Herb King and pull him down from his high horse.

Once the truth was exposed, who in the Physician Guild would respect him? Who would even bother to look at him?

He thought that he merely had to guard against Princess Mo Yu. Thus, wherever she went, he would avoid. This way, he would be able to continue living off the prestige of having treated the Great Herb King. However, never in his wildest dreams had he expected to meet Zhang Xuan under such a situation.

And not to mention, he had even tried to take advantage of the other party's student....

Was I courting death?

Even if Zhang Xuan didn't touch him, just by revealing the fact that Physician Bai Chan wasn't the one who actually treated the Great Herb King, he would have been pummelled to death by the countless physicians even before he could take a step out of his own doors.

....

"Senior, we're in trouble now...."

Seeing the unkempt and head-swollen Physician Bai Chan, Liu Ling walked forward and could not help but to shake his head.

"Trouble? There's no trouble at all!"

Zhang Xuan answered casually.

Since he had made his move, it naturally meant that he had long thought of a solution to resolve this situation. If everything else fails, he would just have to feed each of them lethal poison.

He didn't believe that they would dare to wreck havoc under the threat of death.

"This is the patrol squad. To have given them a beating...."

Not knowing what Zhang Xuan was thinking, Liu Ling spoke a short few words before stopping. Then after hesitating for a moment, he continued again, "Why don't I go to the Master Teacher Pavilion to seek for protection? Given my identity as a master teacher, the Tianwu Kingdom shouldn't dare to do anything to me for the time being. It is just that I might have to undergo judgment at the Master Teacher Pavilion...."

The Master Teacher Pavilion carries the responsibility of protecting master teachers, but if master teachers were to err, they possess the authority to judge them as well.

Originally, because the other party tried to exploit them, they had valid reasons in their defense. However, now that Zhang Xuan had beaten them up like that, no matter how they explain it, they were the first to get physical and hence, in the wrong,

"There's no need!" Zhang Xuan gestured. Pointing to the Bai Chan, whose head had swelled to resemble a pig head, he said, "He'll settle this matter for us."

"Him?"

Liu Ling was perplexed.

Even Zhao Ya and the others looked at Zhang Xuan in bewilderment.

The very reason why this fellow is here is to cause trouble, and not to mention, now that you have smashed a teapot on his head and even beat him up into such a state....

If he could, he would probably kill you on the spot, yet you hope that he'll settle this situation for you?

You must be pulling our legs!

Even Lu Xun, who was standing off to the side, shook his head as well.

This Senior Uncle Zhang is exceptionally talented in various occupations, but he has one fatal flaw; he is too rash.

With such a personality, it is a matter of time before something grave happens.

"Physician Bai Chan, what do you think.... we should do?"

Ignoring the doubtful look that the crowd cast on him, Zhang Xuan turned and smiled at the physician whom he had just beaten up.

"Cough cough, this...."

Despite the other party's smile, he could see a menacing gleam in his eyes and cowered backward immediately. "I am in the wrong. I was blinded by lust and came to cause trouble for your student. Don't worry, I'll resolve this issue quickly...."

After which, Physician Bai Chan stood up, and with an expression full of righteousness, walked over to Squadron Leader Yao's party, and took out a bottle of medicine. "This is some medicine to treat superficial wounds. Also, here is a hundred thousand worth of gold bill, Squadron Leader Yao, you should bring the men to eat something good...."

"Physician Bai?"

Seeing how the fellow was paying and speaking up for the person who beat him up, Squadron Leader Yao and the other patrol squad members were on the verge of madness. However, at this moment, the hushed voice of Physician Bai sounded by their ears.

"Shh, this person over here has connections with Princess Mo Yu, and I saw him traveling alongside her.... You should know how to handle the rest...."

"Connections with Princess Mo Yu?"

Squadron Leader Yao and the others froze, and their eyes narrowed.

Chapter 300

Extorting Physician Bai

Even though Princess Mo Yu couldn't compare to Mo Hongyi, the number one genius of Tianwu Kingdom in the past thousand years, she was nevertheless a top-notch genius. Her status far surpassed any other princes and princesses.

Furthermore, she was on the verge of passing the master teacher examination, besides being highly favored by the emperor.

In fact, there were even rumors claiming that he would devote the resources into grooming her as the candidate to become the next emperor. This way, he could prevent the throne from falling into the hands of Mo Hongyi.

To have connections with her? Traveling alongside her?

Could it be....

They were merely ordinary soldiers who relied on bribes to earn some additional money.... Offending the princess's 'friend', that was no different from suicide!

"Are you.... serious?" Squadron Leader Yao's heart quivered, and he found himself unable to accept the situation.

How is the world be so small? To stumble upon the princess's friend in such a huge Tianwu Kingdom?

Besides, the princess had always maintained her purity and stayed a distance away from the countless geniuses who attempted to pursue her. They had never heard of her having such a 'friend'.

"I wish that it were false...." Physician Bai Chan looked as if he was about to cry.

"This...."

Seeing the other party's expression, the patrol squad members immediately

understood that it was true.

After all, this was the up-and-coming, highly prominent Physician Bai Chan. To not even dare to retaliate after getting pummeled into such a state, something was clearly amiss.

"Since that's the case, then we'll accept Physician Bai's kind gesture. Farewell!"

After struggling to his feet, Squadron Leader Yao clasped his fist.

He didn't dare to offend Physician Bai, needless to say, Princess Mo Yu. Rather than asking for a beating here, it was much wiser for them to just leave.

To be patrolling in the capital, if they didn't know how to adapt to situations, they would have long been beaten to death.

Regardless of whether it was Physician Bai or Princess Mo Yu, they were both figures whom they couldn't afford to offend and it was best that they leave as soon as possible.

Hualala!

In just a few moments, the patrol squad members disappeared completely.

"How are they leaving just like that?"

Liu Ling and the others were still worried just a moment ago, and upon witnessing this occurrence, each and every single one of them became dumbfounded.

This was especially so for Lu Xun. He thought that his Senior Uncle Zhang had been too rash, and upon seeing this sight, his mouth twitched violently.

That was the kingdom patrol squad, they represented the dignity of the kingdom. They got beaten up so badly that their entire faces were swollen like pigs, yet they walked away without a single word?

However, this wasn't the end yet. Physician Bai, who was so arrogant as to disregard even Liu Shi, walked up to Zhang Laoshi and bowed respectfully, "That.... elder, I have already settled the matter. Do you think that.... I can leave now?"

Everyone's eyes popped out.

Senior?

You are already in your forties to fifties, while the other party hasn't even reached his twenties. And you call him your elder?

Do you have to be so shameless?

"Can it be that.... are all Tianwu Kingdom civilians that cheap? Do they have to be beaten up before they can talk properly?"

Yuan Tao could not help but mutter.

Upon hearing those words, even though the crowd remained silent, internally, they couldn't approve of Yuan Tao's words anymore.

How in the world did Zhang laoshi do it?

That fellow was already threatening to make this matter known to the entire city before they even did anything. With the smash of a teapot on his head and more than a dozen consecutive slaps, wouldn't he exterminate everyone here?

Yet, at this moment, he was behaving just like an obedient dog. No one could understand what had happened, and at this very moment, all they could feel was deep admiration for Zhang laoshi.

It seemed as if.... regardless how insurmountable an obstacle could be, once it comes into his hands, it would become a non-issue.

Lu Xun had initially harbored hopes of comparing with the other party. From the looks of it now, his thoughts were truly laughable!

"Leave? Don't be in such a hurry, I'm not an unreasonable person. Since I did something, I will definitely take responsibility. After all, I do feel embarrassed for beating you up." Zhang Xuan glanced at the other party. "How do you intend to deal with your injuries?"

"I was asking for it. It will be fine if I just find some medicinal paste to apply...." Physician Bai Chan laughed dryly.

Make the other party take responsibility?

He didn't dare to!

Putting aside his relationship with the princess, just the fact that he could treat the Contract Gu, which baffled even 3-star physicians, showed how incredible his mastery in the Way of Medicine was. Most probably, no one in Tianwu Kingdom would be able to match up to him. In addition, considering his relationship with the Great Herb King....

Make the other party take responsibility? That was no different from committing suicide!

"Since you say you deserved it, I will not interfere. However.... You framed my student, and this has left a huge trauma in her mind. How should we settle this?" Knowing what the other party was thinking of and what he feared, Zhang Xuan looked at him impassively.

"I...."

Physician Bai Chan's mouth twitched.

"Didn't you say that your stalk of medicinal herb is worth fifty million? How about this. Since your actions have left a scar in my student's heart, you will use this money to compensate her. After paying up, you can scam. Otherwise, let's see if I will break that calamity-bringing thing of yours!"

After which, Zhang Xuan's eyes drifted downward and fell upon a certain spot. Feeling terrified, Physician Bai Chan could but help but to shudder.

"I.... I don't have so much money!"

After a moment, Physician Bai Chan replied meekly with a tearful face.

He was only a 1-star physician. Even though he had swindled quite a bit fortune and committed many evil deeds, he wasn't able to save up that much of money.

"You don't have it?"

Chuckling lightly, Zhang Xuan's hands stretched out all of a sudden and stabbed straight at the other party's forehead.

Almost jumping in shock, Physician Bai Chan's neck tilted backward and simultaneously, his mouth opened just a little.

Hu! Zhang Xuan flicked his finger and an object flew straight into his throat.

"Cough cough.... What is this...."

Pinching his throat, Physician Bai Chan's face paled.

"It's nothing much, just some good stuff which the Great Herb King gave me. Didn't you treat the Great Herb King's illness? You should be familiar with him, right? You can try asking him about it!" Zhang Xuan answered casually.

"I...." Physician Bai's face reddened, and his legs went weak. Unable to suppress himself any longer, he fell to the floor, kneeling. "Elder, please be magnanimous as to spare me...."

The Great Herb King was the spokesperson of the Poison Hall. Even without thinking, it was clear what the other party fed him was....

"It's not impossible for me to spare you. We have just arrived at the capital, and we don't have a place to stay. I want you to find a mansion near the Master Teacher Pavilion! Once you're done, I can consider saving you. Otherwise.... Even if I don't do anything, the Great Herb King's poison should be more than sufficient to send you on your way!"

Zhang Xuan waved casually.

Even though this fellow's character was atrocious, he could still be of help.

Zhang Xuan and the others had just arrived at the capital, and they were strangers in a strange place. With Physician Bai taking care of stuff for them, many difficult matters could be resolved easily.

The reason why Zhang Xuan chose to beat the other party up directly was that he knew the other party would recognize him. Back then, he was with Princess Mo Yu when he encountered the other party, so the other party would surely think that they were related.

If the situation was any different, such brute actions would have had a completely

opposite effect.

Thus, he decided to render help from Physician Bai. This way, they could have a reliable person stand up for them and settle any matter that occurred in the future.

"Elder...."

Physician Bai Chan felt dismal, and bitterness welled on his face.

What the heck is this?

He had merely drunk a little bit of alcohol and teased a beautiful lady. In the end, not only was he scalded with boiling water, the assaulter even demanded a mansion as compensation....

Why does he have to pay despite being the victim?

"Why? Are you unwilling? Fine then. I heard that the poison which the Great Herb King gave me causes maggots to grow in one's head, resulting in a constantly groggy state of mind. If it gets severe, the person might even rip off his clothes and run about nude.... This will last for three days straight before one succumbs to death. I wonder... does this suit your taste?"

Zhang Xuan said.

Physician Bai Chan felt so terrified that his face was drained of color.

Even though his behavior was atrocious, if he really did something like stripping nude and running in the city, life would lose its meaning.

"Why? Don't you like it? That's easy. He gave me eighteen types of poison back then, and if you don't like it, I can let you try something else!" Zhang Xuan said.

"Don't...." Tearful, Physician Bai Chan shook his head in a hurry. "Elder, there's no need to go through that much trouble. Isn't it just about looking for a mansion? This is simple, I will do it right now. I'll find one by tomorrow!"

Having been inflicted with poison, his life and death were under the other party's control. Since he couldn't defy the other party, he might as well.... submit to him!

"Un, that's more like it. Sun Qiang!" Hearing his reply, Zhang Xuan turned around.

"Young master!"

Sun Qiang walked forward.

Yang Shi was his old master, and naturally, he would address Zhang Xuan, who was Yang Shi's student, as young master.

"Follow him and look for a good mansion. Tidy the place carefully. My teacher may be coming in two days!"

Zhang Xuan said.

"Is old master coming? Alright!" Sun Qiang nodded his head in excitement.

"Hurry along then, are you waiting for the sun to rise?" Placing his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan said.

"Yes!" Physician Bai Chan quickly nodded his head and left. He didn't wish to stay here for a single moment longer.

Only after leaving the inn did he heave a sigh of relief. He couldn't help but turn to Sun Qiang, who had just chased up to him.

"May I know.... what's the name of your young master?"

When he met the other party in the Red Lotus City previously, the other party has merely mentioned that he was a fan of his before knocking him out. Even today, the other party had not revealed his identity.

Even though he was so fearful of him, he realized that he didn't even know the other party's name.

"Our master is called Zhang Xuan!"

Sun Qiang nodded.

"Zhang Xuan?" Physician Bai Chan was perplexed. He hadn't heard of any prince or incredible genius going by that name!

"You spoke about your old master previously.... May I know who he is?"

Even though Physician Bai was bewildered, he didn't dare to underestimate them. Thus, he continued asking.

"Our old master is a master teacher of a grade exceeding 3-star!" Sun Qiang said in admiration.

"A master teacher.... of a grade exceeding 3-star?"

Physician Bai Chan trembled.

Even Tianwu Kingdom's most formidable Jiang shi, the pavilion master of the Master Teacher Pavilion, was only a 2-star master teacher. Yet, Zhang Xuan's teacher was a master teacher who had exceeded 3-star?

It could be said that if his teacher wished to do so, he would be capable of destroying the entire Tianwu Kingdom, at his whim!

This Zhang Xuan, so he's actually a student to such a person.

"Indeed. As the old master's direct disciple, the young master has received his inheritance. The reason why he came to the capital is to take the master teacher examination! Not only so, he's a 3-star painter, 2-star beast tamer (heard for Shen Bi Ru), and 1-star apothecary!" Sun Qiang continued.

"3-star.... painter? 2-star beast tamer...."

Physician Bai Chan's body stiffened.

It was no wonder why he was so incredible at such a young age. Any single identity that he casually mentions would already be earth-shattering. Perhaps.... Even Princess Mo Yu might be inferior to him!

"If you serve the young master and old master well, you will be in for a life of glory. But if you were to betray him, I believe that I don't need to tell you what would come!" Knowing what the other party was thinking of, Sun Qiang added in.

"Yes!" Physician Bai Chan nodded. Thinking about what he had enjoyed in the past few days, his heart leaped all of a sudden.

The events today are truly unfortunate, but perhaps, this might also be a rare opportunity!



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